

Harry Potter and the Amulet of Time

**Book 4 – There and Back Again – A Witch’s Tale by Virginia Weasley**

Chapter One – Finally!

With a brilliant flash of purple light, Ron, Ginny, Hermione and Harry found themselves squashed on the floor of a train carriage. With their luggage under them, and their familiars next to them, they found the space between the seats rather cramped. After prising themselves apart, they stood and looked around the compartment.

“ Are we back?” Hermione tentatively asked.

“ I think so,” Ron replied.

Harry confirmed it for them when he spotted a familiar figure caged in the corner.

“ Hedwig!”

The other three whirled around at his outburst and looked over to where their friend was pulling open a cage door and stroking the snowy owl inside. Harry was grinning madly, but Hedwig looked rather confused at seeing her master and his friends three years older than they were before that flash of light. To her, they had only been missing for a matter of seconds.

“ It’s alright, girl, it’s me,” Harry was cooing to his agitated bird, trying to calm her down. Eventually, she seemed to realise that he was, in fact, merely an older version of her master and settled down to enjoy the attention.

“ I guess we really are home,” Ron said in awe, “ We can see our families again. I wonder what Mum’ll think when she hears how many OWLs and NEWTs I got. I passed even more than Percy!”

“ I know. The one I’m worried about is Dad,” Ginny agreed, “ He might not take the news very well.”

“ Well, what do you think I’m going to tell *my* parents,” Hermione snorted, “ I mean, how would you explain *this* to Muggles?”

“ Good point, ‘Mione. What about you, Harry?”

“ Well, I think the Dursleys will put it down to my ‘freakishness’, but be glad they don’t have to house me any more, as I *am* over eighteen. I don’t know what Sirius’ll say. Although we made up before we left, things were still a bit strained. I don’t know what that’ll do to our relationship now. The one I’m really worried about is Sev.”

Ginny came over to her boyfriend and sat on his lap, wrapping her arms around his waist and giving him a squeeze.

“ It’ll be alright, Harry. After all, once they all see us again, they’ll remember us.”

“ True.”

“ But, Harry, mate, you *do* know he’ll be all evil now, right?”

“ He’s not evil, Ron.”

“ Yeah, but in this time, he’s spent the last four years hating you. Do you really think a few childhood memories being restored would make that much of a difference?”

“ I don’t know, Ron, but I hope so. He was a good friend, and I know the real Sev has to be buried under all of the pain and bitterness this Snape has. He’s carried that for a long time, so I don’t know how long it’ll take me to break through it. But I won’t give up on him.”

Hermione suddenly thought of something that made her eyes go wide. Ron, who was sitting next to her, squeezed her hand.

“ What’s wrong, love? You look like you’ve just remembered you didn’t do your Charms essay.”

“ Don’t be ridiculous, Ron,” She said with a frown, “ I’d never forget to do an essay. It just occurred to me that Bill was there.”

“ Bill was where?” her boyfriend asked in confusion. Hermione rolled her eyes at him before explaining.

“ Bill was there in 1976. He was in his first year when we were there for our sixth year. When he sees us, he’ll remember us.”

“ What about your Dad? I dread to think what he’ll say when he realises Harry Potter sang at his big sister’s funeral,” Harry muttered.

“ And what will he say when he realises we know about Persephone?” Ginny asked, “ I mean, we aren’t supposed to know. Even in the past, when it was revealed that we were time travellers to the Order, they didn’t know our real names. Dad’ll remember everything we did for the Order. The fights, the strategies, the Hollerith tests, everything!”

“ Calm down, Ginny. At least it’ll make it easier for him to understand. The same with the others that knew we were time travellers. They’ll find it easier to accept, and help to explain it to those who didn’t know,” Harry pointed out.

“ But...”

“ *Don’t* worry. I think we need to work on damage control, now that we know we’re back. Figure out who knows what, and what we have to tell people.”

“ Good idea, Harry,” Hermione agreed, “ But there’s something that’s been bugging me.”

The three looked at her expectantly and waited for her to continue. Hermione took a deep breath before telling them what was bothering her.

“ Don’t you think it’s odd that we have been jumping places on each trip.”

The others looked at her, bewildered. It was Ron who recovered first.

“ ‘Mione, what are you on about? We’ve been using a time thingy; of course we’ve been jumping places. That was the point.”

Hermione gave Ron and her other two confused companions scathing looks.

“ I *know* that. What I meant was, jumping locations.”

More blank looks.

“ Merlin, you lot are slow. Jumping *places*. The amulet took us through time, we figured as much out ourselves. What I’m trying to say is that our location has differed. We went from the train to the Hogwarts grounds, from the Great Hall to the Great Hall, twice, and from the Great Hall to the train. Why are we jumping from place to place geographically, and not just temporally?”

Ron, Harry and Ginny looked at each other and shrugged.

“ Dunno.”

“ Don’t care.”

“ Me either.”

Hermione made a noise of frustration and crossed her arms, looking at her three friends in annoyance.

“ Aren’t you even a little bit curious?”

“ No.”

“ Nope.”

“ Nah.”

“ Urgh!” Hermione said, scowling at them. As one, the other three burst out laughing at her antics. She eventually broke, and let out a light giggle. Once they had all calmed down, Harry took charge of the situation.

“ Alright. Damage control. This is important. Who knows about us?”

“ The Order.”

“ The teachers.”

“ Some of the Aurors.”

“ Voldemort.”

“ Some of the students’ parents.”

“ Some of my family.”

“ Some of the Death Eaters.”

“ Anyone else?” Harry asked.

“ Random students we went to school with, and the elves,” Hermione added.

“ Alright, we’ll start with our enemies. Voldie and the Death Eaters will know who we were soon enough. I can’t see Voldie being happy, though. I mean, what do you think he’ll be like when he finds out Harry Potter and Harry Evans are the same person?”

The other three shuddered at the thought, and sent their friend anxious looks. Harry simply shrugged it off.

“ Let him throw everything he has at us. The more he sends our way, the quicker we can deplete his forces. I mean, between the four of us, the elves, and the Order I think we can deal with him. Hey, I wonder what happened to Minh and Eustace...”

Harry gave this new thought some careful consideration. He knew that if his grandparents had still been around, they would have taken him in when his parents died. The fact that they hadn’t meant they were either dead, or out of contact with the wizarding world. Sadness washed over Harry at the thought of the family he had grown to know being gone. He quickly pulled himself back together, though, and got his thoughts back on target.

“ So, who else? The Order will be easy. We just explain what happened. The same with our families. Problems may arise if we meet any of the students from 1975 and 1976. There’s also one thing

that we haven't thought about. What will your families say when they hear you left on the train as fourteen and fifteen year olds and arrived at Hogwarts seventeen and eighteen? And what about the people on the train? They saw us at the station. What do we say when we get off? They'll be suspicious."

" We'll have to make sure they don't see us," Hermione decided, " We can't have any of our schoolmates running to the teachers as soon as we get there telling them that the four of us look different than we did a couple of hours ago. I mean, Dumbledore'll understand, but the other teachers won't. It could start a panic."

" So what do we do?" Ginny asked.

" We have to make sure we aren't seen when we get off the train. We just have to stay hidden in here for the next couple of hours until the train pulls up, then turn invisible to go up to the school."

" It won't work," Harry said decisively, " Any number of things could go wrong. We could have someone run into us, or sit on us in the carriages. I mean, when we got in a carriage, everyone else would think it was empty, and come inside. We need something more reliable. It would also be a good idea if we get there early, so we have time to speak to the teachers before the feast. Then Dumbledore will know what to say, and we won't have to miss it."

" Good point, mate," Ron agreed, " I think we should apparate up there."

" What about the anti-apparition wards," Hermione countered.

" We can break through them. We know from the knowledge the founders gave us how the wards were constructed, and how to get around them if necessary."

" Yes, but there's one thing you're forgetting, Ron," Hermione told him.

" What?"

" If we punch through the Hogwarts wards, the security systems will go off. There's no way of getting around that. And as soon as the

alarms go off, we'll have the whole faculty and about a hundred angry Aurors on our backs. Let alone any Order members Dumbledore has reassembled."

" Good point."

" I know," Harry interrupted.

" What?" Ginny asked him from her position on his lap.

" We can fly."

" Fly?"

" Fly. We all have flying animagus forms. We can use *them*. It'll get us there early, and we can talk on the way. I would have said to use brooms, but I feel like stretching my wings."

Just as the others were nodding their heads in agreement, the compartment door was pulled sharply open...

## Chapter Two – The Twins

“ Ahhhhh!”

“ Ahhhhh!”

The four time travellers looked up in alarm when they heard their door being pulled open and stared in shock at the two identical redheads standing in front of them. Each had a look of surprise and disbelief on their face as they looked at the four in awe.

“ Fred? George?” Ginny whispered.

“ Gin?” Fred gasped.

Ginny immediately threw herself at her startled brothers, throwing an arm around each of them and pulling them close. They both slowly reciprocated the gesture when their little sister burst into tears. Moments behind the younger girl, Ron rushed over and did the same. Harry and Hermione watched the reunion in sadness, wishing they had someone to do that to as well. Harry could see the tears pooling in Hermione’s eyes, and leant forward, grasping one of her hands in his.

“ It’ll be alright, ‘Mione. You’ll see your parents soon.”

The girl gave him a weak smile and nodded her head in agreement. The pair turned to look out of the window, giving Ron and Ginny the privacy they needed. After a few moments, the two youngest Weasleys pulled away, wiping their eyes and sitting down next to their respective other halves. The twins stayed in the doorway for a minute before taking a seat, one next to each of their siblings.

“ Ok, I’m completely weirded out now. Anyone care to explain why you guys look so different?” George asked.

Looking at each other closely, the four time travellers realised how different they really did look. It wasn’t just the fact that they were older and more mature than they had been. Ron was taller, and had more muscles, built up from hours of sword training. His hair had



grown long again after the months he spent in Poland during 1944, and now once again resembled that of his older brother Bill. He also had several scars from the same experience that hadn't been there before. His face was more mature, and he looked even older than the eighteen years he had lived. Harry was similarly afflicted. The number of scars he had was greater than Ron's, also as a result of his capture two years before. He was taller and stronger, but with a slighter build than his best friend. The famous scar that was once again revealed to the world was easily visible on his forehead due to the short, spiky hair he now favoured. His eyes looked bigger and more vibrant now that they were no longer hidden behind the large wire frames of his youth. On closed inspection, his skin tone appeared paler than before, as if he spent little time in the sun, and his incisors were slightly longer, if not as visible as when he consciously bared his fangs. Hermione and Ginny also looked older, having developed into beautiful young women, rather than the awkward teenagers they had been before. They had a grace that was not present previously, and an inner strength gained from experience. The thing that frightened the twins the most was what they saw in their companions' eyes. They showed wisdom, experience and deep inner pain caused by too much suffering, a look that had not been there the last time they had looked.

"Um...where to begin," Ron started.

"It's kind of complicated..." Ginny agreed.

"Just tell us the short version. How come when we saw you an hour ago you looked normal, and now you're all..."

"...big? I mean, there's no..."

"...explanation. You can't change that much..."

"...in such a short time!"

The twins gave the time travellers expectant looks, and the four sent each other conspiratorial glances.

What are we going to tell them? Harry frantically asked the others.

We'll have to tell them the truth

But, 'Mione, Dumbledore might not want everyone to know

Ron, he'll have to tell everyone anyway. We look too different. There's no other explanation

We'll just have to edit what we tell them Harry decided.

What do we need to miss out? Ginny asked.

I don't want them to know about my son Harry decided.

Why not? his girlfriend asked him.

I just don't. Not that many people know about him, actually. Just you three, 'Tea, Peeves, Lolide, Gaerwyn and Eustace. I think that's all, I may have forgotten someone. I don't even think Dumbledore knows. I just don't want people to be disappointed in me when they find out I was a father at sixteen and left my girlfriend unmarried and alone to raise an illegitimate child. I really don't think that would go over too well

Now that you mention it, I agree. I think it's for the best if you don't tell them. / don't want anyone to know about Grossrosen Hermione sent with a shudder.

I agree, love. I don't know what my family would say about that, and I really don't want to relive the memory of it by talking about it. If they find out, they can talk to Dumbledore, or even Yanika

Is Yanika even still alive? Harry asked, I mean, she'd be about seventy five now

Or Amelia Logan. She was old in 1944, and you know Muggles and squibs don't live as long as witches and wizards. What about some of the older Order members? Like Floribunda Sprout, Janus and Julianne McGonagall, Peter Black, Alice Sewell, Gaius Flitwick and Romulus Lupin Hermione listed.

How about my grandparents and Aunt Heather? Harry asked, Surely I would have heard from them before if they were still alive

You'll have to ask Sirius his girlfriend comforted him, He might know

"Erm, excuse me? Is anyone going to answer us or are you just going to sit there and stare at each other?"

Fred's voice effectively ended the telepathic conversation and brought the four back to the matter at hand. Several minutes had passed, they realised, and the twins were becoming more bewildered by the moment.

"Sorry, guys," Harry apologised, "We were just deciding what to tell you."

"But you weren't saying anything!"

"Yes we were."

"How?"

Like this

Both twins jumped in surprise and put their hands over their ears, shaking their heads from side to side.

"What was *that!*?" George exclaimed.

"Telepathy," Harry explained.

"Since when could you do *that?*"

"Two years."

"Two years! And you never told us?!"

"You weren't around to tell," Harry told them. They gave him blank looks until Ginny intervened.

"You may not believe this, but we haven't seen you in three years."

“ You saw us an hour ago, but...”

“...you looked different then,” George finished.

“ For us it’s been three years.”

“ The train’s not *that* boring. I know it seems like a long journey, and time drags, but...”

“ George, you’re not listening,” Ginny said, annoyed, “ We haven’t been here for three years. Hermione gave Harry a magic amulet for his birthday, right? And then, he read about it in a book after we got on the train, and it said that if you hold the amulet while saying the words ‘tempus vehere’, you would get great personal wealth...”

“ So we tried it, naturally,” Ron interjected.

“ And it transported us through time. We’ve just gotten back. That’s why we look older. We’ve lived three years since you saw us an hour ago.”

Fred and George gave the four friends amazed looks before turning to each other and communicating silently, as only twins could. Turning back to the others, they both cracked up laughing. Harry, Hermione, Ron and Ginny watched in bemusement as the pair fell onto the floor and held each other as they tried to recover from their hysterics. When they had finally calmed down enough to speak, they looked up to the others, their eyes filled with mirth.

“ You really had us going...”

“...for a while there. We thought...”

“...you were serious! Gone for...”

“...three years. Time travellers! That’s...”

“...the best prank we’ve seen...”

“...in a long time!”

“ It’s not a prank,” Harry said seriously, looking at the twins lying on the floor. His tone of voice made them look at him carefully, once again seeing that disturbing mix of sadness and knowledge in his eyes. As they watched their friend, they began to realise that he wasn’t joking.

“ You can’t be serious...”

“ I mean, where did you go? If it’s not a joke, that is.”

“ It’s not a joke,” Ron told them, “ We went to three different times, and spent a year in each.”

“ What times?” Fred asked, intrigued now that he thought they might be telling the truth.

“ Well, let’s just say that Salazar Slytherin isn’t as scary as everyone makes out, and Dumbledore had witnesses when he defeated Grindelwald,” Harry said evenly.

The twins gaped, their mouths flapping open and closed as they stared back at the four in front of them.

“ I’d close your mouths if I were you,” Hermione chastised, “ You might catch flies.”

The twins snapped their mouths shut and shook their heads lightly, as if to clear away the confusion. Pulling themselves off the floor, they retook their seats and leant back, gathering their thoughts. Eventually, George began to question them again.

“ So, are you telling us you met the founders?”

“ Yes, we did. We were there the year Slytherin fell to Gryffindor. Harry helped in his defeat, and saved Lord Gryffindor’s life,” Ginny said.

“ And we were there during the war with Grindelwald. We were there when he was defeated. We also saw the effect of the Second World War on the Muggles,” Hermione continued.

“ And I got to see my parents in their fifth year,” Harry finished quietly.

The twins looked thoughtful for a moment before Fred asked them the obvious.

“ Prove it.”

“ How do you want us to do that?” Ron asked, “ Just name what we have to do to prove it.”

Fred and George gave it some thought before coming to a decision.

“ Talk to each other. In the language to founders spoke.”

“ You mean like this?” Harry said, switching to Anglo-Saxon seamlessly.

“ I think that’s what they mean,” Ginny answered in the ancient tongue.

“ Alright!” George whooped, “ That’s amazing! What else do you know?”

“ All sorts of things,” Hermione said, wandlessly conjuring a glass of water and taking a sip as the twins looked on in awe.”

“ You know wandless magic?!”

“ Yes, it’s one of the first things we learned with the founders.”

“ Amazing!”

“ Wicked!”

“ Who else knows about this?” George asked, “ I mean, if you were here when Harry’s parents were at school, then surely people know about this.”

“ We erased everyone’s memories before we left. The only ones that knew after that were Dumbledore and Harry’s parents and grandparents, who obviously are dead, and can’t tell anyone,” Ginny explained.

“ And of those who’s memories we erased, only a few knew the truth. A few knew we were time travellers, but didn’t know our real names,” Hermione continued, “ And even those who did, we didn’t tell them about the future in case they would change it.”

“ So, only Dumbledore knows,” Fred confirmed.

“ And Gaerwyn, Lolide, Peeves and Gallatea,” Harry announced, “ And my Aunt Heather if she’s still alive, but she didn’t know how we were related, just that we were.”

“ You have another aunt?” Fred asked in confusion.

“ And who are Gaerwyn, Lolide and Gallatea?” George added.

“ Heather is my other aunt, but everyone but us thinks she died in 1976. So don’t mention her. Gaerwyn is my great-grandmother, and Lolide is her sister. Gallatea is the Grey Lady.”

“ You know the Grey Lady? As in, the Ravenclaw ghost?”

“ Of course. She was my girlfriend.”

“ Your *girlfriend*?”

“ Yeah. Gallatea Ravenclaw, daughter of Lady Rowena Ravenclaw.”

The twins seemed dumbfounded by this, but soon recovered.

“ So the only ones who know this apart from us are either dead, Obliviated, or ghosts.”

“ Yep, that about sums it up,” Ron nodded.

“ So, how old are you now?” Fred asked.

“ Well, Hermione, Ron and I are eighteen, and Ginny’s seventeen.”

“ You mean, our baby brother’s older than us, and out little sister is that same age?!” George asked in shock.

“ Yeah, we’ll be in your year this year. Should be fun!”

“ Yeah.”

A few moments later a strangled noise came from Hermione, interrupting everyone’s thoughts. The girl had gone rather pale, and seemed to be thinking hard. She then turned to everyone else.

“ What if Dumbledore doesn’t want to explain this to the school? What if he wants to keep it hidden?”

“ He can pretend we grew up a bit over the summer,” Ron decided, “ I mean, no-one got *that* good a look at us at the station, and the only ones who’ve been to see us on the train are the twins, and they know the truth.”

“ That’s not true Ron,” she continued, “ The twins aren’t the only ones to see us like we were. Don’t you remember three years back when we were here? We had a visitor...”

“ Who?”

“ Malfoy.”



### Chapter Three – Flight to the School

The other occupants of the carriage stared at Hermione as they let this new information sink in. The twins hadn't known, and didn't know the relevance. However, the time travellers did. In all honesty, Ron, Harry and Ginny had all forgotten about Malfoy paying his traditional visit before they had left. Now, though, they realised that it could be a problem. If, for some reason, Dumbledore didn't want Voldemort and the rest of the school to know the truth, then the blond boy could make life very difficult. He would surely tell his father, who would then take the information to Voldemort. This could be dangerous for a number of reasons. Most importantly, it could jeopardise Severus' position as Dumbledore's spy. If Lucius Malfoy went to the Dark Lord with the information before the Death Eater that was actually stationed at Hogwarts, Sev's loyalty would undoubtedly be questioned.

"We could obliviate him," Ron finally suggested.

"We can't guarantee that'll work," Hermione countered, "I mean, Crabbe and Goyle were there as well, so we'd have to alter their memories too. The problem is, we don't know if they've mentioned their visit to any of the other Slytherins. If they happened to mention anything about our appearance to anyone else, and then they suddenly can't remember it, whoever they told would become suspicious and might be able to break the memory charm."

"Who's to say they mentioned it to anyone," Harry pointed out.

"Who's to say they didn't," Hermione retorted, "We've no way of knowing. I think we'll just have to leave it for now, and see what Dumbledore says. If it's a problem, we'll worry about it then."

The others nodded in agreement and the group lapsed into silence as each of the seventh years became lost in their own thoughts. Several minutes later, a frown wrinkled Fred's brow as he spotted something in front of the window.

"Is that Scabbers?" he asked as he pointed to the fat grey rat encased in a glass jar. The eyes of the time travellers widened as they realised they still had Peter Pettigrew in captivity. Over the

course of the last three years, they had forgotten a lot of the specifics of their lives before they left, this being such a thing.

“ Peter!” Harry exclaimed, “ I forgot we had him!”

“ Who’s Peter?” George asked in confusion.

“ The rat! It’s really Peter Pettigrew.”

“ Isn’t he dead?” Fred asked, just as lost by the conversation as his twin.

“ No! He was the one that blew up the street of Muggles, and the one who betrayed my parents and framed Sirius,” Harry explained. The twins’ eyes grew wide as they heard this.

“ Sirius?! You mean Sirius Black, the escaped murderer?” George exclaimed.

“ Yes, he’s my godfather. And he didn’t murder anyone. He was set up.”

“ Are you sure, Harry? I mean, have you actually spoken to him?”

“ Of course. We met at the end of my third year, and he visited during the Triwizard Tournament. We write to each other as often as we can as well, but sometimes it’s difficult as he’s on the run.”

Fred turned to the other three and sent them questioning looks.

“ It’s true,” Ron said, “ I’ve met him too, and so has Hermione. He’s really nice when you get to know him, and very protective of Harry.”

“ I’ve not met him,” Ginny told her brothers, “ But Harry’s told me all about him.”

“ I think you’d get on with him as well,” Harry said with a grin, “ I’m sure Padfoot would like to meet the new terrors of Hogwarts.”

The twins gaped at him and nearly fell out of their seats when they heard what Harry called Sirius.

“ Padfoot?! Padfoot from the Marauders?!”

“ The very same. We got to see all four of them in action last year, and we even had a prank war,” Ron told his envious brothers.

“ Who won?” George asked.

“ We never decided a winner. There were several...incidents...that meant it was called off at the last minute,” the Boy-Who-Lived explained.

“ What sort of incidents?”

“ I’d rather not talk about it,” Harry said uncomfortably, “ It’s a time in my life I’d rather not remember. If you want to know about it, ask Moony.”

“ Who was Moony? And who were the other two?”

“ Well, Wormtail is Peter Pettigrew, the evil little Death Eater.”

“ Wormtail was a Death Eater?” George gasped, “ One of the infamous Marauders was one of You-Know-Who’s followers?!”

“ Yes. The filthy traitor.”

“ What about the other two?”

“ Well, Moony is Remus Lupin, you’ll remember him from your fifth year. And Prongs was James Potter,” Ginny said. The twins looked at Harry with a new respect.

“ We salute you, son of Prongs, the mighty prankster,” Fred said with a laugh. A grin broke over Harry’s face, banishing the dark thoughts the conversation was raising. It had occurred to him that he was discussing people who were dead, and events that had passed years ago, yet to him it was only a couple of hours. A couple of hours since he had seen his parents living and breathing, and now he was back to being an orphan. This train of thought brought his mind back to the problem at hand.

“ What are we going to do with the rat? I mean, he’ll have heard our conversation, and as he’s seen us he’ll have his memories of his fifth year back.”

“ We’ll have to obliviate him,” Hermione said, “ If for some reason he does escape, he can’t go back to his master and tell him anything. I hope it doesn’t happen, but you never know. Not even an unbreakable jar is foolproof, and even if we do give him to the Ministry, he might escape from Azkaban.”

“ Good point. Who wants to do the honours?” Ron asked.

“ I will,” his sister replied, “ I’m good with memory charms.”

“ Alright, Gin. Just make sure to erase everything about our current conversation, and put an anti-eavesdropping charm on the jar so he can’t hear anything else,” Harry asked as he put an arm around the girl’s waist. Ginny nodded and lifted her hand, moving in a complicated pattern and muttering under her breath. When she was done, she noticed that Fred and George were giving her and Harry funny looks.

“ Harry, mate, why have you got your arm around our sister?” Fred asked.

“ And why aren’t you saying anything about it, Ron?” George queried.

“ Fred, George, I have my arm around Ginny because she’s my girlfriend,” Harry said tentatively, a look of apprehension on his face. He had dreaded telling the Weasleys about him and Ginny. Six brothers were a lot to contend with, as well as having Mrs. Weasley to satisfy. He had been dreading it ever since they got together. Ron, surprisingly, had been alright with it after he had given Harry the ‘If you ever hurt my sister...’ talk. As he pointed out, at least Ron knew what sort of person Harry was. It was better than his little sister dating a stranger. Harry watched for the twins’ reaction, and was relieved when he saw two identical grins spread across their faces.

“ I guess Ron gave you the talk,” Fred said.

“ The one about taking care of her?”

“ That’s the one.”

“ Yeah, he did. Then he welcomed me to the family.”

“ Good on him! Harry, you know we want Ginny to be cared for, and we couldn’t think of anyone better for her than you,” George told him sincerely.

“ Thank you. I love Ginny, and would never do anything to hurt her.”

The girl in question started at this. In the months they had been going out, Harry had never admitted that he loved her. He said he cared for her, but not that he loved her. A grin spread across her face and she kissed him.

“ You love me?”

“ I love you, Gin.”

“ I love you too, Harry.”

The group sat together in the compartment for another half hour before Hermione realised how late it was getting. The twins, who normally only visited their siblings on the train for a few minutes, had stayed over an hour, and were enjoying hearing some of the stories the time travellers were telling them. They were disappointed when Hermione brought the conversation to a close.

“ Everyone, I think it’s time we went up to the school. The train will arrive in an hour and a half, and it’ll take us a while to fly there. If we leave it any later, we’ll have to apparate to Hogsmeade and fly from there.”

“ I think we should do that anyway. I mean, we’ll have to apparate out of the train anyway, so we may as well go there. We can’t transform here and leap out of the window. I think people may notice that,” Ginny pointed out.

“ Will you show us your animagus forms later?” Fred asked, having been curious to see them after they had described the forms to the twins.

“ We’ll show you after the feast,” Harry said, “ I’ll take you to the room Godric Gryffindor gave me. We’ll have enough space there, and we can show you stuff while we’re there. I might even take you to visit my house.”

“ The one you had built?”

“ Yeah. It’s called Domus Corvus Corax, and has been the headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix ever since its founding. It’s a lovely building, and you’ll be able to see our class portraits from the years we’ve lived. I had all three made into paintings, and they’re hanging in my house, along with the statues of the friends we lost.”

“ Great. We’ll meet you in the common room after the feast and you can take us,” George confirmed.

“ Sure, that’s fine.”

The four time travellers then gathered their belongings up and shrunk them with a wave of their hands, placing them into their pockets. Pig and Hedwig were set free to make their own way to the school and their cages were also shrunk. Crookshanks and Wormtail were entrusted to the twins, who promised to take very good care of them, encouraged by Harry who threatened to try out some of the more painful Dark Arts curses he knew if they let Pettigrew escape. Once they were ready, Harry checked that he still had Simbi and Nirah curled around his wrists before giving the signal. With four pops, the Weasley twins stood alone in the train compartment.

The four time travellers reappeared in the middle of Hogsmeade, surprising an old witch who was just coming out of Honeydukes. She gave them an annoyed look before continuing on her way to the Three Broomsticks. Looking around to make sure no-one was watching, the four headed over to the Shrieking Shack, and hid behind it as they transformed. Ron’s thestral form immediately became invisible and lifted off the ground, closely followed by Hermione as an owl and Ginny’s pelican. They flew around to keep a lookout for Harry, whose winged snow leopard might attract some unwanted attention. The two birds wouldn’t be given a second glance, but a flying cat would. When they were sure Harry wouldn’t be spotted, Ron let out a loud whinny and the younger boy spread his

wings and leapt into the air. Before they knew it, all four were soaring high over the Forbidden Forest, looking over to the turrets of the castle visible over the tree line. Each was lost in his or her own thoughts, but all considering the same problem. What their friends and family would say.

Ron and Ginny were thinking very similar things. What was their mother going to think? They both believed she would be the one to take it the hardest. After all, she had missed three years of her children's lives. They could already picture her reaction in their minds, as she started to cry upon seeing them. Then she would give them the inevitable lecture about playing with magical amulets without knowing what they did. Once she found out about their skills, she would be proud, but at the same time angry at them for risking their lives in the numerous battles they had attended.

Mr. Weasley would react differently. He would initially be pleased to see them, and then start to berate them for the risks they took in the past. Of course, being an Order member, he would know all about their exploits. Trying to talk to him about Persephone would be the hard part. Both Ginny and Ron were in agreement on one point, though. They wanted their father to tell the rest of the family about his sister. They would help, as they had been friends with her. The pair also wanted to visit her tomb, to pay their respects.

The rest of the family wouldn't be much of a problem. Bill and Charlie would be interested, wanting to hear more about their travels. Percy would pretend to be uninterested, but would gobble up any information they let slip to him. Any other family members hadn't seen them for a long time, so they would just put their changed appearances down to them being growing teenagers. Their friends could be a problem, though. They were leaving their year groups behind and joining the seventh years, and this was sure to affect the friendships they had. It wouldn't be so bad for Ron, as his two best friends had been with him, but for Ginny it would be very hard.

Harry and Hermione also had the problem with their classmates, but they had other things to worry about. Hermione didn't know what she was going to tell her parents. How was she to explain time travel to a pair of dentists? Muggles just couldn't accept something like that as

well as witches and wizards. Although they supported Hermione being a witch, they didn't ask too many complicated questions about magic or the wizarding world because they knew it was beyond their understanding. Something like the amulet of time incident would be hard for them to accept.

It wasn't too bad for Harry, when all was said and done. He knew Sirius would be a bit strange to confront, but on the bright side he could think about the Dursleys, and how he was now old enough to leave home. He would never have to go back to Privet Drive again. As for the rest of his family, that would be something he would have to investigate. Heather, as far as he knew, was living in the Muggle world somewhere. He mentally noted to send Petunia an owl asking for his other aunt's address, if she had it. Tracking down Eustace and Minh would be another matter, though. He hadn't been told that they were dead, but on the other hand, if they had been alive after the fall of Voldemort, they would have taken him in. He was sure of it. So, the question remained. Where were the Potters?



#### Chapter Four – Back Again!

The four friends came in for a smooth landing on the Hogwarts lawn, right in front of the main doors. Transforming back into their original forms, they strode up the front steps and pushed the heavy doors open, before making their way into the Entrance Hall. They made to head towards Dumbledore's office, but Harry stopped them when they reached the bottom of the main staircase.

"Um...guys, I think we should go via my room."

"Why would we need to do that?" Hermione asked him.

"Two reasons, really. For one thing, we don't know the password. I don't feel like wasting time yelling sweet names at the gargoyle until we guess the right one. If we go into my room, we can create a door right into his office. I also think we should get changed. These robes are a little dated, and have the wrong House crests on them."

"Good point, Harry," Ginny said, before moving to the nearest wall and creating a door to Harry's secret room. After she pushed it open and entered, the others followed close behind; making sure it was shut properly. They didn't want to accidentally leave it open, so that any passing student could walk in. They all took out their luggage and placed it on the floor, enlarging it back to its original size. The owl cages and Crookshanks' carrying basket were placed in the corner, and some of their books were unpacked onto the bookshelves. After choosing some clean robes, each in the colour of the House they had been in the previous school year, they pushed their trunks to one side. Hermione and Ginny went into the weapons room to put on their robes, while Harry and Ron stayed in the main room to change. Once they were done, and had reassembled in the main room, Harry snapped his fingers twice and waited. Seconds later, a House elf appeared with a small pop.

"Mister Harry Potter Sir! What is happened to you, you is all grown up!"

"Hello, Dobby," Harry said to the beaming elf, "It's nice to see you again."

Dobby's eyes welled up and he started pulling on his ears.

"The Great Harry Potter is pleased to see Dobby! Dobby is not deserving this from Mister Harry Potter!"

"Of course you are, Dobby. Anyway, I just wanted to ask if you could have these robes cleaned for us," Harry said uncomfortably, pointing to the pile of discarded robes on the floor. Dobby's eyes lit up at the prospect of work, and he started to bounce up and down.

"Mister Harry Potter is a great wizard, and he is asking Dobby to wash his robes! Dobby is honoured!"

"Thanks Dobby."

At this the small creature burst into tears, much to Harry's dismay.

"Harry Potter Sir is thanking Dobby, as if Dobby is an equal!"

"Yes, Dobby, I am. Look, we really have to go now; we have to see Professor Dumbledore."

"Dobby is doing as Mister Harry Potter asks. Will Mister Harry Potter Sir be visiting Dobby in the kitchens?"

"I'll come soon, I promise. Bye Dobby."

Taking the hint, the small elf gave Harry a squeeze around the middle and disappeared, taking the discarded robes with him. Harry let out a small sigh of relief before turning to an angry looking Hermione. Realising what he had done, he tried to back away, but she simply started to advance on him.

"Harry! I can't believe you did that! You *know* how I feel about elvish rights!"

"Hermione, stop," Harry pleaded, "I didn't do anything to compromise the rights you want them to have. Dobby is already free, *thanks to me*, and it's not as if I ordered him to do anything. I asked nicely, and I said thank you. Didn't you see how happy he was?"

“ That’s not the point....”

“ It is! Dobby likes work, and he was happy to do it. He’s my friend, ‘Mione, I wouldn’t take advantage of him.”

“ I guess...”

“ Hermione, just drop it. I promise not to do it too often.”

“ Alright, just don’t let me see you do it, or I’ll get angry again.”

“ Can we go and see Dumbledore now?” Ron asked, “ It’s nearly time for the other students to arrive.”

The others nodded in agreement, and the red haired boy went over to the wall, placing his hand on the rough stone and creating a door into the headmaster’s office. He was just about to open it when his sister laid a hand on his shoulder.

“ Ron, wait.”

“ Why?”

“ We don’t know what he’s doing. We don’t want to interrupt anything important.”

“ Good point.”

The elder boy waved his hand at the door, muttering slightly under his breath. The door shimmered for a second or two before turning completely transparent. Looking through the door, they could see Professor Dumbledore sitting behind his desk, a dish of Lemon Drops in front of him and a cup of tea in his hand. Across from him sat Minerva McGonagall, equally equipped with a teacup and nibbling on a biscuit. They seemed to be discussing something, but the time travellers all agreed that it didn’t look like something they couldn’t interrupt. Turning the door back to its original state, they looked at each other nervously, brushing their robes to get the creases out.

“ Are you all ready?” Harry asked.

“ Yes.”

“ Yeah.”

“ As I’ll ever be.”

Harry gave his three friends penetrating looks, trying to reassure himself that they were indeed ready, and weren’t just saying they were to appease him. When he was sure they were as prepared as they could be, he took a deep breath and turned the handle.

To say the two teachers were shocked was an understatement. The four time travellers had to hold in amused laughter as they pushed the door open and walked into the office. Dumbledore looked surprised for a second before a soft smile spread across his face and he sat back in his chair, eyes twinkling madly. Minerva’s reaction was a little more profound. She took one look at them, gaped, and fell off her chair. It took a lot of effort for the students not to burst out laughing at that point. She stared at them in shock for a few moments before shaking her head thoroughly as if to clear it. After a minute or two she managed to compose herself and stand up, sitting shakily back in her chair. Harry sent her an amused look before waving his hand, conjuring four more chairs, two either side of the Transfiguration professor. Harry and Ginny sat to her right, and Hermione and Ron sat to her left.

“ I see you are back,” Dumbledore said with a smile.

“ Yes we are, at last,” Hermione replied.

When Minerva recovered from the shock of seeing some of her students three years older than they were supposed to be, and the surprise she felt as her memories of them in the past came back to her, she asked them the obvious question.

“ What?!”

“ What what?” Ron asked with a grin. Minerva spluttered for a moment before taking a deep breath and gathering her thoughts.

“ What’s going on?”

“ Surely you remember us, Professor,” Hermione said with a frown.

“ Of course I remember you, Miss Granger. What I want to know is what you, Miss Weasley and the rest of the Golden Trio were doing in the past! And why couldn’t I remember it until now?”

“ It’s a long story, Professor,” Ginny explained.

“ I have time.”

“ I think it would be best if we left this discussion until we have everyone present, don’t you agree?” Dumbledore interjected.

“ I think so, Headmaster,” Harry said, “ I think it would be best to wait for the rest of the staff and our families. Do you think we could get them here before the students arrive?”

“ I think that can be arranged. Is there anyone you don’t want to tell about this today?”

“ Who’s the new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher?” Ron asked.

Dumbledore’s face darkened as he replied.

“ A witch by the name of Dolores Umbridge, who was appointed by the Ministry to make sure the school is being run properly.”

“ I don’t want any Ministry people here that I don’t know,” Harry said firmly, “ If they found out about my Dark Arts knowledge they’d have me in Azkaban before I could blink.”

“ That’s a good point Harry. Anyone else?”

“ I don’t think so. We can trust our families, and all of the other teachers. I think we should ask them to start arriving in about half an hour’s time. It’ll take a while for everyone to get here, and we’ll need to discuss what we’re telling them before they arrive.”

“ An excellent point, Harry. After all, it may take a while for Molly and Arthur to round up all of their children. Especially William and Charles.”

“ Yeah, I know what you mean Professor,” Ron said, “ It takes weeks for us to arrange a family get-together. I dread to think what would happen if we gave them such a short deadline.”

“ Then I will contact them immediately. Who are we inviting, anyway? Specifically, I mean,” Dumbledore asked.

“ I would like Sirius and Remus to be here,” Harry requested, “ I think they are the only ones I would trust with this at the moment. Unless you happen to know what happened to my grandparents...”

Dumbledore gave the young boy a mournful look that spoke of bad news. Harry deflated at the look, realising that whatever the headmaster was going to tell him would not be what he wanted to hear.

“ Harry, I’m so sorry, child. The last anyone heard of Minh-Minh-Lama and Eustace Potter was just after you were born. From what I can gather, they decided to go into hiding, having chosen somewhere they would be safe from Voldemort. They told your parents where they were going, and asked them to go as well, as they had you to think about. Alas, James and Lily decided to stay here, and the elder Potters disappeared without a trace. Nothing has been heard of them since. I have always hoped that they found a safe place to live, and just never came back, but I am not hopeful. Surely, they would have come back once the war was ended and your parents were killed. If they knew, they would have taken you in. I believe, therefore, that Voldemort or his Death Eaters must have found and killed them. I’m sorry, Harry, I know you were close.”

Harry hung his head, a defeated look in his eyes and a deep sadness radiating from him. In no time, though, he had pulled himself together and was ready to continue.

“ I understand, Headmaster, and thank you for telling me. I had half expected it, anyway. Why else had I never heard from them? Anyway, who else will we invite?”

Everyone was glad to get off the topic of Minh and Eustace. They had all been close friends of the elf and the Potter, and none of them wanted to dwell on the thought of them being dead. It was like losing

Ardwick, Christabel and Persephone all over again. Ron quickly steered the conversation back to a safe subject.

“ I think we need to invite my parents and all of my siblings. Even the twins. They already know about us, as we met them on the train, and they have something in their possession that will make a certain escaped convict a very happy man.”

Dumbledore looked at the elder Weasley in curiosity, but decided to pursue the matter at a later date. Right now, they needed to get this whole mess sorted out.

“ Anyone else?”

“ My parents,” Hermione said, “ I know they’re Muggles, and probably will find it hard to understand, but they have a right to know.”

“ Very well. I will contact everyone and tell them to come here in half an hour.”

Standing up, Dumbledore headed over to the fireplace and took a pot of floo powder from the mantelpiece and knelt on the floor. Taking a pinch of powder, he threw it into the flames and called out the destination.

“ Remus Lupin.”

Moments later, the worn face of the former Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher appeared in the fire and looked around in curiosity. Before his gaze reached the time travellers, they each turned themselves invisible, so as not to confuse him. It would be bad enough explaining when the other Marauders were there in person, they didn’t want to make it harder by being seen.

“ Albus! What can I do for you?” the werewolf asked.

“ Remus, there’s a matter we need to discuss in person. Would you please bring yourself and Sirius to my office in half an hour? I’m going to lift the anti-apparition wards for ten minutes at that time, as we have several guests arriving, and as you know you can’t floo into

the school. It would also take too long to make a portkey that will get through the wards.”

“ I understand, Albus. What do you need to discuss with us?”

“ All will be revealed upon your arrival. All I am prepared to say is that it has to do with certain events that took place in your fifth year.”

“ I see. I think...We will be there, Albus.”

“ Thank you Remus. See you later.”

As soon as the green once again became yellow and orange, the elderly headmaster took another pinch of floo powder and threw it in the flames, clearly calling out for the Burrow. Moments later, Molly Weasley’s head appeared, and she sent the headmaster an angry look.

“ What have they done this time?”

“ Who?” Dumbledore asked in confusion.

“ Fred and George! They can’t even have reached Hogwarts yet, and they’re already in trouble!”

“ Molly, dear, this isn’t about the twins. In fact, it is concerning your two youngest. Don’t worry, they’re not in trouble, but it is a matter that concerns your whole family. I wonder, could you assemble them all in my office in half an hour?”

“ All of them?” Molly asked in confusion, “ Even Arthur, Bill and Charlie?”

“ All of them.”

“ What is this about, Headmaster?”

“ Molly, dear, how many times must I ask you to call me Albus?”

“ I’m sorry, Albus. Old habits die hard. But Sir, do you realise how hard it will be to get them all?”



“ Just do your best, Molly, for I cannot ask more than that of you. Trust me, though, when I say it is of the utmost importance.”

“ I don’t doubt it is. I’ll see what I can do. How am I to get them there? We can’t floo in...”

“ I will be lowering the anti-apparition wards for a short time when everyone is expected to arrive. You can apparate right into my office.”

“ Is it not dangerous to lower the wards?”

“ Very.”

“ It must be important, then. I’ll see you soon, Albus.”

As soon as Molly’s head disappeared, Dumbledore stood and made his way over to Minerva and the now once again visible time travellers. Turning to the Deputy Headmistress, he gave her a hopeful look.

“ Minerva, I was wondering if you could do a small favour for me.”

“ And what would that be, Headmaster?” she asked stiffly.

“ I would like you to go and inform the other members of staff about the meeting. All except Professor Umbridge, that is. Then I would like you to apparate to Miss Granger’s house and bring back her parents. After that, could you collect the Weasley twins from the Hogwarts Express?”

“ Of course, Albus.”

Just as she was about to leave, Harry stood up and called to her.

“ Professor McGonagall?”

“ Yes, Mr. Potter?”

“ Could you please tell Fred and George not to forget to bring my pet?”

Minerva looked at him in confusion, but nodded anyway before turning and leaving the room. Dumbledore folded his hands in his lap and smiled at the four time travellers.

“ So, what are we going to tell them?”

“ The truth,” Ginny said, “ But just the basics. We’ll tell them what we have to, and answer things more specifically only if they ask.”

“ Agreed. What about the rest of the school, and indeed the wizarding world? We won’t be able to keep this under wraps for long.”

“ I think we should tell the school that we went on a time travelling trip, but were sworn to secrecy. That will explain away our appearance, and the fact that we will need to start on our seventh year,” Hermione said.

“ Are you sure, Miss Granger? Can’t we come up with another excuse for your change in appearance?”

“ I’m afraid not, Headmaster. You see, Malfoy came into our compartment before we left, so he knows that we looked different getting on the train that when we got off. I think it would be best to tell the truth, but tell them that we are sworn to secrecy, and therefore can’t tell anyone anything.”

“ If that is what you want, then I agree. I take it you will be back in Gryffindor now?”

“ Of course they will,” Ron exclaimed, “ They should never have left!”

“ I don’t think so, Ron. I mean, I’m glad I got to see how other people lived. Yes, it’ll be nice to a Gryffindor again, but I will miss the other Houses,” Ginny countered.

“ Me too.”

“ So be it,” Dumbledore said, “ I will have your things moved to the seventh year dorms after the feast. For this evening, though, I would

like you the wear the robes you have on at the moment. They make you look older and they will help you to gain more respect.”

“ As you ask,” Harry agreed.

The group continued to discuss the matter for another twenty minutes, before Dumbledore lifted the anti-apparition wards in anticipation of the arrivals. The time travellers were all nervous and almost jumped out of their skin when they heard a pounding on the door. Dumbledore smiled a small smile, and his eyes twinkled madly. He looked at Harry, and called for the person at the door to come in. The next moment, the door was thrown open and a dark, imposing figure strode into the office.

“ Albus, what is this all about...”

The deep, silky voice trailed off as an intense gaze settled on the time travellers and widened greatly. Shocked black met emerald green.

“ Harry?”

“ Hello, Sev.”

## Chapter Five – Worried Weasleys and Panicking Padfoot

“ Harry?”

“ Hello, Sev,” the green eyed boy replied with a smile.

The Potions Master looked at the time travellers in shocked confusion before imitating Minerva’s action of shaking his head as if to clear away the last remnants of the spell. Sitting down heavily in a newly conjured chair, he rested his elbows on his knees and placed his head in his hands.

“ My best friend and mentor is Harry Potter...”

“ Surprise,” Harry said weakly. The man gave him a withering look before looking up at the headmaster.

“ Albus, tell me it’s not true.”

“ I’m afraid it is, child.”

“ I did say I’d see you again in twenty years,” Harry said tentatively.

“ I looked up to you, Potter. I respected you as a friend, and this is how you repay me? I cannot believe this! The one person I trusted the most in the world turns out to be Harry bloody Potter!”

“ You said you wouldn’t hate me,” Harry whispered. The older man looked at him sharply.

“ What?”

“ You said you wouldn’t hate me. You told me if you ever met a Dark Potter you would give them the benefit of the doubt.”

“ Potter,” he said in warning.

“ And I believed you, like the fool I am! We were friends for a year, Sev. A *year*. And here I thought that meant something to you.”

“ It did! That’s the problem. You are *just* like your father. I was taken in by his lies often enough as well!”

“ Sev, I’m not lying!”

“ Really? Then tell me Potter, because I’m curious. If it wasn’t all an act to make fun of me, then why would you even try to make friends with someone you had hated since you were eleven?”

“ Because when I sat down at that Slytherin table I saw a young boy. Fifteen years old. And he was someone worth making friends with. I saw a boy who was the perfect Slytherin, both cunning, sly and ambitious. But I also saw something else. I saw a vulnerable young man who had suffered much like I had in his short life. Not in the same way, but who had also known hardships. And in that moment I saw a worthwhile human being. Someone I would want as a friend. You may think I’m just a carbon copy of James Potter, but you’re wrong. While he and his friends could barely look past House rivalries to befriend me, I looked past the person you became. I didn’t care that in the future you would make my young life a living Hell. I looked past it and saw someone I could relate to, and pass on my knowledge to. I saw someone who would always be there for me, as I was for him in my short stay. And I hoped that once I got back, we could reconcile our differences and make a fresh start. I was always willing to try if you were, and hoped we could be friends again. I guess I was wrong.”

Having said his piece, Harry stood and walked out of the office, leaving a gaping Severus in his wake. Ron, Ginny and Hermione sent the Potions Professor pointed looks before standing to follow their friend. Eventually, only Severus and Dumbledore remained, and much to the Potion Master’s dismay, the headmaster’s eyes were twinkling brightly.

“ Whatever you want to say, Albus, just say it.”

“ What makes you think I have something to say?”

“ I’m sure, after what just happened, you will have some whimsical and nonsensical pearl of wisdom to impart on me.”

“ Indeed, although I shall be blunt.”

“ That’d be a first,” Sev muttered under his breath.

“ I just wanted to ask you why you felt the need to question Harry’s loyalty as a friend. From what I know about Harry, he treasures the few close friends he allows himself, and would never do something as spiteful as pretending, just to gain blackmail material.”

“ But he’s Potter!”

“ And therein lies the problem, my boy. When you look at him, or even hear his name, you see James, not Harry. You see James, the one who bullied you in school and did everything possible to make your life miserable. You see the boy who unwaveringly defended his friend after he tried to kill you. What you don’t do, Severus, is look past the name to the boy you grew to know. Harry Anguifer, as you knew him in your fifth year, was simply Harry Potter. The only difference is that you looked beyond the name, as you had no reason to be prejudiced against him. You saw Harry, not James. He is still the same, Severus. To him, he left 1976 only a matter of hours ago. Even seeing you now, the way you were when you were unfair to him as a student, he is still willing to make amends. That is how much you mean to him.”

Sev sat in thoughtful silence for a few minutes. Eventually, he looked up at the headmaster with regret in his eyes.

“ You’re both right. I should look past his name and see the boy I once knew. I looked up to him because he was a good person, despite everything he had been through. I have misjudged him, because I have become the coldhearted bastard he knew I would. He said he thought I would put that aside, but when he saw I didn’t he said he was wrong. But he isn’t wrong. I think it’s time to lay James Potter to rest, and see Harry as his own person.”

“ Very good, Severus. I am proud of you. Now, all you have to do is tell Harry exactly what you just told me.”

“ But I don’t know where to find him. And he must hate me.”

“ Harry doesn’t hate you. He never did. The only person he feels a negative emotion that strongly about is Voldemort.”

“ Where has he gone? Do you know?”

“ You know him well, Severus. Tell me, where would he go?”

“ The quidditch pitch.”

“ Then go and find him.”

Sev gave the headmaster a sharp nod and left the office with a dramatic swirl of his black robes.

Harry sped at top speed around the pitch, trying to leave his frustrations behind him. Logically, he knew he should have expected no more from the Potions Master, but he had kept the hope alive none the less. What Sev said had hurt, and for the moment he just wanted to keep flying. It had always been the one thing guaranteed to keep his mind from wandering to things he really didn't want to think about. Now, though, it was losing its effectiveness and the odd stray thought flitted across his mind. Sev's reaction had been typical of this Snape, yet when he looked into his eyes, he could still see traces of his friend hidden in there.

Going into a steep dive, Harry passed Ron, Hermione and Ginny, who were sitting in the Gryffindor stands watching him. He didn't mind them being there, even if he really didn't want to talk right now. Their presence alone comforted him no end. He would always be able to rely on them to do the right thing. After three years of adventures together, the group was closer than ever, and they had become a family. They were all each of them had for such a long time and they had built bonds that could never be broken.

As Harry began to tire and flew lower to the ground, he noticed a dark figure standing off to one side, hiding in the shadows. The long greasy hair and billowing black robes were unmistakable. With a sigh, he flew down to where Severus was standing and lightly leapt from his broom in front of him.

“ Hello, Professor Snape, what can I do for you?”

Sev winced at the title and gave Harry a searching look. The emerald green eyes were shuttered, showing no emotion. Severus knew from experience that Harry was steeling himself for disappointment, and didn't want to show the other man how much he was hurting. Taking

a deep breath, he said the one thing he never believed would be said to James' son.

"I'm sorry, Harry."

As the group made their way back to the headmaster's office, they heard raised voices coming from the direction of the gargyle. Sprinting over, Sev gasped out the password and they rushed up the spiral staircase. As soon as they reached the top, Harry pounded on the door and waited to be admitted.

"Come in," came Dumbledore's voice through the door.

Harry pushed the door open slowly, taking in the scene before him. Although the voices had stopped at the knocking, the room was in complete chaos. Sirius and Remus were stood next to Dumbledore behind the headmasters' desk, and the rest of the staff, excluding Umbridge, Hagrid and Minerva, were on the other side. Most of the teachers had their wands drawn and pointed at the convict, and Professor Flitwick was bouncing up and down in alarm. Trelawney was huddled in the corner, hiding behind an ornamental umbrella stand and muttering about seeing the Grim.

"What is going on here?" Severus demanded.

"I think they're a little upset at seeing Sirius here," Harry muttered. Before he could say anything else, most of the room's occupants started shouting and pointing, or simply staring at them in alarm. The four had been instantly recognised, and everyone had suddenly regained their memories of the group's time in the past. Sirius looked as if he was about to faint, Remus was openly gaping at Ginny, Flitwick was squeaking madly, and Trelawney was muttering about death omens. The rest of the teachers were firing questions at either the headmaster or the new arrivals.

"Silence!"

Everyone shut up immediately and looked at the headmaster, who was now leaning on his desk and glaring at them all.



“ That’s better. Now, I want everyone to sit down, quietly, and wait for an explanation. We still have a few people to wait for, so until then I will let you ask a few questions. Harry, if you could?”

Dumbledore gestured to the floor, and Harry nodded in understanding. He waved his hand in a complicated pattern and enough chairs for those present and those yet to arrive appeared. They were arranged in rows in front of the desk, and four extra ones had appeared behind the desk, two on either side of Dumbledore’s chair. The time travellers took these seats, and the headmaster sat between them. Once everyone was sitting comfortably, Dumbledore smiled at them and asked them the obvious question.

“ What do you want to know? And one at a time if you please.”

The teachers looked at each other before some of them raised their hands like obedient students. Dumbledore let out a chuckle and signalled for Professor Vector to start.

“ Um...I was wondering why Sirius Black is here, and why you won’t call the Ministry.”

Dumbledore’s eyes twinkled madly as he gave the professor a wide smile.

“ Sirius is here because I asked him to come, and I haven’t called the Ministry because if I did they would arrest him.”

“ Why don’t you want him arrested?” was the next question.

“ Because he is innocent.”

This caused quite a stir, as teachers started to valiantly protest. Sirius and Remus tried to blend into the background, but they found themselves bombarded with questions. Eventually, Harry had had enough, so he stood up and sent out green and red sparks. As soon as he gained everyone’s attention, he slowly gave them an answer.

“ Alright, that is *enough*. My friends and I have had a *very* stressful day, so if you would *please* stop shouting it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you. Now, I have a way of proving that Sirius is innocent, and it should be arriving right about...”

With a pop, Minerva and the Weasley twins appeared in the middle of the room.

“ ...now. Fred, George, if I could trouble you for my ‘pet’, I would be very grateful.”

Fred grinned at the Boy-Who-Lived and stepped forward, handing him a glass jar with a very irate rat inside. Remus and Dumbledore gasped in surprise, and Sirius let out a sob of disbelief.

“ Everyone, I give you Wormtail, Voldemort’s personal servant, also known as Peter Pettigrew.”

The talk started immediately, but everyone was soon silenced when Harry waved his hand at them, casting silencing spells on each of them.

“ I did ask nicely, but you wouldn’t listen. As I was saying, before I was so rudely interrupted, Sirius is innocent, and the real culprit was Peter Pettigrew, who I have here in this jar. Professor Dumbledore, could you please see that Wormtail is delivered to the right people and that Sirius is freed?”

The headmaster nodded his head in agreement, all the while looking at the captured rat in amazement.

“ Harry, how did you catch him?” the teary voice of Sirius came from the back of the room.

“ I spotted him when I went to Diagon Alley with the Weasleys. He was there to catch me, but I saw him outside Gringotts in his rat form. I simply sneaked up and stunned him. ‘Mione put him in an unbreakable glass jar she had conjured.”

“ I thought you couldn’t do magic in the holidays.”

“ Ron, Hermione and I were given permission.”

“ Oh. Harry, I-I don't know how to thank you...”

“ You don't have to, Siri. I did it because I knew you didn't do anything,” looking at Sev, he added, “ This time.”

As this sank in, Minerva whispered to Hermione that she was just going to get her parents, before blinking out of existence. The room was silent while everyone digested what they had just been told. The peace was interrupted when Minerva returned with a rather frazzled looking pair of Muggles. Obviously, they had never experienced apparition before, and seemed a little shaken, but none the worse for their trip. As soon as she saw them, Hermione leapt to her feet and rushed across the room, throwing her arms around her mother. The woman looked down at her daughter in confusion, wondering who she was. It had only been a week or two since she had seen her, and she had changed drastically. Pulling back, Hermione wiped the tears from her eyes before repeating the action with her father. Once she had calmed down, she looked at them both and gave them a weak smile.

“ I've missed you so much, both of you.”

Comprehension dawned in the Muggles' eyes as they realised that the beautiful young woman in front of them was their daughter. Mrs. Granger was the one to ask what was going on.

“ Hermione? Is that you?”

“ Yes, Mum. I realise I look different...”

“ What happened? What's going on?”

“ It's a long story, Mum. If you would like to sit down with the others, we'll explain when the Weasleys get here. If there's anything you don't understand, I'll explain better later.”

“ Alright, honey. Are you alright? Has something happened?”

“ Something’s happened, and I admit it wasn’t easy, but I survived and I’m fine now.”

“ Alright, we’ll wait. But this had better be good, young lady.”

Once the Grangers were seated, the room fell into an uncomfortable silence. Harry and Sev started up a mental discussion about potions to pass the time, but the rest simply became lost in their thoughts. Eventually, several pops could be heard as the redheaded family began to appear. All of them were there, both Molly and Arthur, as well as Charlie, Bill and Percy. They looked at the large crowd of assembled teachers, two Muggles, a convict and a werewolf. Confused, they turned to Dumbledore for an explanation and their eyes widened when they spotted the time travellers. Molly, Arthur and Percy had only seen the four that morning, and so they were rather shocked by their appearance. Recognition flashed in two pairs of eyes, though.

“ Weatherby?” Bill asked in disbelief as he looked at Ron.

“ Yes?” Percy answered automatically before realising it wasn’t him who was being addressed. Following his brother’s gaze, he realised he was talking to Ron.

“ You remember me, then, Bill.”

“ How could I forget? When I was in my first year you were the one who always helped me with my homework.”

Ron and Ginny turned to their father, who was giving them a stern look.

“ I can’t believe you two were in the Order! Fighting in battles! Nearly getting yourselves killed! I’m so proud of you,” he finished warmly.

Molly, who still didn’t know what was going on, picked up on the mention of battles.

“ You fought?! In battles?! How could you endanger yourselves like that! Did you ever kill anybody?! When did this happen?”

“ Calm down, Mum, it’s not like it sounds,” Ron said in a soothing voice. Ginny poked him in the ribs and glared at him.

“ It’s *exactly* like it sounds, Ron, don’t try and sugar coat it.”

“ I don’t understand! Why do you both look different? When I heard the Headmaster wanted to meet us, I expected something from Fred and George, but never you two. And you, Harry and Hermione, what do *you* have to do with this?”

“ Molly, dear, if you and your family would care to seat yourselves, all will be explained as soon as possible. We have been waiting for you to arrive, and people are getting impatient,” Dumbledore placated.

The maternal Weasley nodded her head and went to sit down. However, as she moved to take her seat, she realised who it was next to.

“ Sirius Black!”

“ Calm down, Mrs. Weasley, he’s innocent,” Harry interjected before she could do anything.

“ Harry, dear, he betrayed your parents...”

“ No he didn’t,” he said, looking at the shocked Weasleys, “ It was Peter Pettigrew. We’ve captured him, though, so Sirius should be freed soon.”

Although Molly didn’t look happy about it, she took her seat, as did the rest of the family, and waited with everyone else for an explanation. Harry started to pace back and forth before beginning his tale.

## Chapter Six – Now What?

“ I’m just going to give you the summarised version,” Harry told everyone, “ Because to tell you everything that has happened to us would take a long time. When I’ve finished, you can ask me some questions if you like, and if you want to ask us any specific details about things we would like to keep private, I ask that you speak to us alone later.”

Harry waited while everyone nodded their acceptance. He was preparing to give them a brief summary, as there were a lot of things they wanted to keep under wraps. If they wanted to discuss the things he was going to miss out, they would have to wait and ask later. There were things he was only prepared to answer in front of certain people.

“ Alright, some of you know a little of what has happened, and others know a lot. There are people, though, who know nothing at all. For the benefit of those, I will explain things that others may already know about. I ask those that know already to bear with me.”

Taking a deep breath, Harry prepared himself and began his speech.

“ The story starts on my fifteenth birthday. Hermione gifted me with a small amulet on a chain that she had found in a shop in Sofia, Bulgaria,” Harry said, holding up the amulet for everyone to see, “ She thought it would be the perfect present for me, as it is decorated with several animals and a symbol. In the centre is a lion, much like the Gryffindor emblem, surrounded by a phoenix in flight, a winged horse, a unicorn and a lightning bolt. It wasn’t until a few hours ago that I realised the significance of these symbols. That, however, will be discussed later.”

Many of the people in the room were sending each other confused glances, not seeing the relevance of this information. Harry flashed them a smile that reassured them that he did have a point, and was about to make it.

“ I thought nothing more of the amulet until I went to Diagon Alley to buy my school supplies, the same trip upon which I captured Peter

Pettigrew. I saw a book about amulets in a bookshop, and decided to buy it in case mine was mentioned in there.”

Harry looked closely at everyone to see if they had picked up on how he had phrased the sentence. He did not want to say that the book shop was in Knockturn Alley, so he conveniently said ‘a bookshop’ instead of ‘the bookshop’, which would have implied Flourish and Blotts.

“ Earlier today, I was reading the book on the train when I found a description of it, claiming that by saying a spell it would bring great personal wealth. We decided to try it. I must stress, though, that Hermione was against the idea. We sat on our trunks in the middle of the compartment and said the words to the spell,” Harry placed the amulet of Dumbledore’s desk, “ Which were ‘Tempus Vehere’. As many of you will know, this means ‘time travel’ in Latin.”

Harry smirked slightly at the gasps he heard, and looked intently at the shocked faces. Some looked more surprised than others, especially the Muggles. Harry was pleased to note, though, that Hermione’s parents seemed to understand the concept better than he had expected. With Hermione’s intelligence, though, it wasn’t that surprising. She must have gotten her brains from somewhere. Once the frantic whispering trailed off, Harry continued with his explanation.

“ Needless to say, we were most surprised when we found ourselves on the Hogwarts grounds. The sensation was similar to a portkey, so we thought we had simply been moved geographically, and we were rather shocked when we got to the castle to find four people waiting for us. We soon discovered that they were speaking Anglo-Saxon. After a quick translation charm, courtesy of Hermione, we were introduced to Godric Gryffindor, Salazar Slytherin, Rowena Ravenclaw and Helga Hufflepuff.”

Everyone gaped at the four after this little revelation. Those who had known, such as Remus, Dumbledore and Sev, sat in amused silence as Sirius fell off his chair and Percy fainted. Molly looked about ready to cry, and most of the teachers looked as if they wanted to start asking questions about the Hogwarts founders. After enervating Percy with a wave of his hand, causing more stares, Harry carried on.

“ We were taken to Lord Gryffindor’s office, where Lady Ravenclaw performed a knowledge sharing spell. We now have all the knowledge of the founders in our heads. Ancient magics, old customs and dead languages. We took our OWLs and NEWTs at the end of that year and got perfect scores in every subject. While we were there, we were taught invisibility, wandless magic, the animagus transformation, sword fighting, archery, martial arts and duelling, among other things. We were there to see the fall of Slytherin, and the end of the dark times.”

Harry gave everyone a moment for this to sink in before moving on to the next year.

“ Exactly a year to the day since we arrived, we used the amulet once again. The amulet is irritating like that. It must be used on the same day of the year, between a certain time, otherwise it won’t work. It also continues to bring you forward towards your own time in three or four stages. The next place we went, as some people will remember, was 1943. There we made friends, helped to fight in the war against Grindelwald, and were captured for several months by the enemy. I witnessed the deaths of my great grandparents in a Muggle air raid in London, and helped my grandfather Eustace to overcome his grief somewhat. The four of us were also responsible for the friendship between my grandparents. While there, we saw Professor Dumbledore destroy Grindelwald, I battled with a young Tom Riddle, and the Order of the Phoenix was founded. The next stage was 1975, where we met the Marauders, played some pranks, and generally pissed Voldemort off. That was the most fun year we had, I think, apart from the battles of course.”

With a wave of his hand, Harry conjured a glass of water and took a few sips while everyone digested the information they had been given. After a moment, he looked at everyone and smiled.

“ Any questions?”

Everyone immediately raised their hands. Harry suppressed a smirk and gestured for Arthur to start.

“ Were you there when Percy died?”



Almost everyone looked at him strangely at this question, sending glances in the direction of the former Head Boy, who was looking at his father as if the man had grown an extra head.

“ Father, I’m not dead.”

“ I know you’re not, son,” Arthur said with a sad smile, “ But Percy is.”

Harry decided to interject before people started questioning Arthur’s sanity.

“ Mr. Weasley, I wasn’t there when the event happened, but I was there straight after it. I’m sorry, there was nothing I could do, any of us could do. She was dead when we got there. She was a good friend to us, you know, and we would never let anything happen to her. We were outside at the time, trying to keep Grindelwald’s followers out. Mr. Weasley, she gave her life to save others, and if she hadn’t, many would have been killed in the Great Hall.”

Arthur bowed his head for a moment before turning to the curious looking Weasleys.

“ Percy was my sister. Her full name was Persephone, but we called her Percy for short. She went to Hogwarts in the 1940s, and was killed in 1943 when Dark wizards attacked the school. Harry sang at her funeral, that much I remember.”

“ Why did you never mention her?” Fred asked.

“ Because it was too painful. She went off to school and I never saw her alive again. We were very close, and I was devastated when she died. It’s just nice to have other people around who knew her.”

After a moment of contemplative silence, Harry stood up and cleared his throat.

“ I think we should split up, now. If you have any questions, it would be best if you asked us individually.”

Everyone nodded, the teachers heading for Dumbledore, who obviously could give them many of the answers they were looking

for. The Weasleys gathered around Ron and Ginny, and Hermione's parents went to ask for clarification. Harry went over to a corner where Remus and Sirius were waiting for him. He gave his godfather a sheepish look before looking at the ground. He felt a pressure under his chin and allowed Sirius to tip his head back. The pair looked at each other for a moment as tears started to trail down the younger man's cheeks.

"Siri, I'm sorry," he whispered.

"You have nothing to be sorry about, Harry," the older man whispered back.

"I do. I shouldn't have humiliated you like that. Or caused you so much pain. I love you, Siri, you're the closest thing I've ever had to a real family, and I hurt you so badly. I was angry, and I took it out on you. You were only a child. You shouldn't have had to go through that," Harry sobbed. Sirius pulled his godson into his arms and hugged him tightly.

"Don't think about it, Harry. It's in the past, forget about it."

"Not for me! For me, it was only a few weeks ago!"

"Harry, listen to me. You were angry at me. You had a right to be. I did something deeply, deeply stupid, and you punished me accordingly. I admit, I wasn't thinking when I sent Snape after Remus, but the guilt I felt afterwards, after I realised what I had done, what could have happened, was enormous. You know how you feel about Cedric Diggory? Well, it's the same sort of thing. You feel guilty for something you didn't do, but thought you could have prevented. I feel guilty about what I did, and what could have happened. We can't dwell on 'could have beens'. I forgive you, for what you did. It was more than justified. I've paid for my crimes in Azkaban, I want to forget the past and concentrate on the future now. Do you think you can do that too?"

Harry looked deep into Sirius' eyes and saw only pain and honesty. His godfather was sorry, and Harry knew it.

"We make a right pair, don't we," he said with a snuffle.

“ We do that, Kid, we do that.”

After a while, Harry realised that time was getting on, and that the Hogwarts Express would be arriving in the not too distant future. He still had to tell everyone his opinions on what the amulet markings meant, and that would take a little explaining. Standing next to Dumbledore he cleared his throat a couple of times and waited for a response.

Nothing happened.

Harry wrinkled his brow in annoyance before trying again. There was still no change, as the volume of chatter in the room was drowning out his attempts. Eventually, he rolled his eyes and sent the headmaster a conspiratorial look before mentally linking up with everyone in the room.

*SHUT UP!*

Everybody visibly started and gripped their heads, falling into silence. When they realised they weren't being shouted at any more, they started to look around the room in confusion, trying to find out where the noise in their heads had come from. Harry and Dumbledore stood back and laughed in amusement as comprehension dawned on the faces of some people, while others still looked completely baffled. Taking pity on them, Harry stepped forwards and cleared his throat again, grinning when everyone whirled around to listen to him.

“ That's better. Thank you for your attention, *finally*. I'm sorry I had to resort to that, I don't like shouting in people's heads.”

At the confused looks Harry was getting, he rolled his eyes.

“ I'm a telepath.”

Harry smirked a little at the confused looks turned to awe.

“ Anyway, that's not the point. There's something I think I should bring to light, something that I only realised when we were about to come home. If you would please sit down, I will explain.”

Everyone did what he asked without question. Even Dumbledore looked at the Boy-Who-Lived in curiosity. He himself had never gotten a good look at the amulet, and so didn't know the significance of the markings it held. To have grabbed Harry's interest, though, they must have been important.

"Alright," Harry said, "First, I want to tell everyone that there have been several instances on our travels that have led us to believe that we were meant to go there. In the time of the founders, we learned many skills that would help us here in the fight against Voldemort. At the time, we thought it was sheer luck that we were given such a once in a lifetime opportunity, but in recent years we have come to realise that many things would not have turned out as they have if we had not used the amulet. Our destinies are heavily entwined in time, so much so that any change would have brought everything we know crashing down around us. We have encountered several temporal paradoxes that cannot, as yet, be explained. We have also been present for many events that could have turned out very differently. For instance, I helped Gryffindor to defeat Slytherin, and stopped him from dying until the healer arrived. If I had not been there, Salazar Slytherin would have overrun the wizarding world with his consort, Lucifina, and all Muggles and Muggleborns would have suffered. There are also simpler things, such as the Hogwarts Express. It was created while we were there, by Helga Hufflepuff, as a way of dropping the students off around the country. It was especially useful for the Muggleborns and half bloods. While it was hundreds of years before the Muggles created steam engines, Lady Hufflepuff used what knowledge she had gained from us during the knowledge transference to build the train. We didn't necessarily know how it worked, but she used what we did know and modified it."

"Are you saying that Helga Hufflepuff built the Hogwarts Express?" Professor Sinistra asked.

"Yes, I am. You see, from the mundane to the monumental, our lives are intricately woven into the fabric of time. This leads me to the markings on the amulet. As I said before, there is a lion in the centre, the significance of which I am not quite clear on. However, the other four are important. They are a unicorn, a phoenix, a winged horse and a lightning bolt. The lightning bolt is self explanatory," he said,

pointing to the visible scar on his head, “ And the others tie in with Ron, Ginny and Hermione’s Order Marks.”

To prove his point, he gestured to his friends, and they each exposed their marks to the crowd. They gasped at they saw the symbols tattooed on the students’ skin.

“ You see, Ron chose a thestral to represent his animagus form, Ginny chose a phoenix as she thought it matched her fiery personality and her hair. Hermione has a unicorn because she likes their purity. These are our Order marks, and they are all present on the amulet. That can’t be a coincidence. We were meant to go back in time, we were meant to fight Slytherin, Grindelwald and Tom Riddle. Everything that has happened to us has been preparing us for the final battle. We have practiced on some of the worst evil wizards in history, now it’s time to get rid of our very own Dark Lord. We don’t know where the amulet came from, how old it is, or who made it. All I know is that we were meant to have it. I know it.”

Harry sat down and looked around the room at the people sitting before him. Everyone looked impressed and a little awed. The four of them had grown up over the last few years, more than they should have, but the teachers and families alike could all tell that they now had what it took to fight Voldemort. They had been given the knowledge, they had acquired the skills, and they had had the practice. If they worked as a team, they would be unstoppable.

## Chapter Seven – New Lessons and a Surprise

The meeting came to an end soon after Harry's explanation, and the teachers made their way down to the Welcome Feast. The Weasleys, Grangers, Sirius and Remus had all been invited to stay at the school for a couple of days to give them the chance to spend some quality time with the time travellers. All four of the students felt they needed to be close to those they considered family after being cut off from them for so long. The Weasleys had eventually accepted what had happened to their two youngest, but Molly especially still wasn't happy about their exploits, especially the amount of combat situations they had found themselves in. The Grangers were having a harder time grasping the situation, though. As they were Muggles, it took a lot more explaining, even when it was Hermione who was telling them as simply as possible. They just couldn't grasp the fact that their little girl was old enough to vote, drink alcohol, and marry without their permission. She was eighteen, a legal adult, and they had missed the last three years of her childhood.

Sirius was taking it the hardest out of everyone. Even though Remus tried to talk some sense into him, the animagus couldn't help feeling guilty for missing out on so much of his godson's life. He had missed twelve long years while he was in Azkaban, and most of Harry's third and fourth years he wasn't in contact with the boy. The previous year especially, as he still had to be careful not to get caught. Now he had missed a further three years because Harry was off on a crazy trip, leaving Sirius feeling empty and lonely. Harry was an adult now. He didn't need his godfather to provide a home for him now that he was free. Sirius felt as if he was no longer needed to be a part of Harry's life, and that was what hurt the most.

As everyone made their way to the Great Hall, Dumbledore and Ron discussed the last minute arrangements for the four of them. They had all agreed to be placed once more in Gryffindor, as that was where they had originally been sorted. They would now be taking classes with the seventh years, though; as Dumbledore knew they had successfully passed their fifth and sixth years without problems. What to tell the school had been the hardest part to decide on, but eventually they settled on something informative, yet vague enough not to cause too many problems. The four were to wait in a

room off the Hall until they were announced by the headmaster, before making their way back to their House table. When the group finally reached the Great Hall and walked through the doors, they could see that most of the teachers were already seated. Harry looked at the Head Table intently for a moment before moving over to the Potions Master to ask him a question.

“ Sev, why is one of Hagrid’s creatures sitting at the Head Table?”

Sev looked at him in confusion for a moment.

“ Where?”

“ There, between Professors Flitwick and Sprout.”

Severus looked over to where Harry was pointing, and a small chuckle escaped his lips as he realised what the boy meant.

“ Harry, that’s Professor Umbridge, the Defence teacher.”

“ Really?” Harry asked in curiosity, “ I never would have guessed. Is it just me, or does she look a little...sour?”

“ It’s not you. Harry, don’t trust her. She’s from the Ministry, and is supposed to be inspecting the school. Fudge is telling people that Shirley isn’t back, and this is part of his plan to undermine Dumbledore’s authority. She’s here to make sure our esteemed headmaster doesn’t scare the students with ‘fictional’ stories of the Dark Lord’s return to full power.”

“ Sev, I thought the Ministry didn’t have any authority over Hogwarts.”

“ It doesn’t really, it’s all down to the governors. Unfortunately, the governors have been...persuaded...to agree with the Minister on this issue.”

“ Really? Well, she’d better not cross me, I’m telling you. Voldie is back, and no toad faced little Ministry spy is going to tell me any different.”

“ Be careful, Harry,” Sev said in earnest, “ She has a lot of influence in high places. She’s not someone to cross.”

Harry gave the older man a sharp look before his face split into a wicked grin.

“ Neither am I.”

After being ushered into the side room before Umbridge could notice, Harry, Hermione, Ron and Ginny sat themselves down in front of the fire and waited for the signal. Sev was standing on the outside of the door, waiting for the headmaster to announce them. Once the explanation had been given, he would open the door and they would go to their House table. As they waited in silence, an increasing amount of noise could be heard through the door coming from the Great Hall.

“ What do you think the reaction will be?” Hermione asked.

“ Not sure, love. I bet a few faint, though. I can’t wait to see the look on Malfoy’s face!”

“ *Ron!*”

“ What? The little ferret deserves to have the wind knocked out of his sails. Just think, Harry knows more Dark spells that *he* ever will.”

“ Not that I’ll use them unless necessary,” Harry defended.

“ Of course you won’t, mate, but the option is there, and is enough to scare the little maggot with.”

“ Shh, Ron, I think Dumbledore’s starting,” Ginny said, before tilting her head in the direction of the door.

The other three sat still, listening to the headmaster’s words through the door. The wood dulled the sound, so they had to listen very carefully to make out what was being said. Just as he was about to start his speech, Hermione’s eyes lit up and she wandlessly cast an eavesdropping charm, allowing them to hear what was going on in the Hall with perfect clarity.



“ Welcome, students, to another year at Hogwarts,” Dumbledore was saying, “ Before I give you the usual notices, I have something rather bizarre to tell you all...”

“ Hem hem.”

The Hall fell silent, and the time travellers sent each other questioning looks. No-one, as far as they had seen, had ever interrupted Dumbledore during his start of term speech.

“ Headmaster, if I may,” came a sickly sweet voice.

“ Oh, of course, Professor Umbridge.”

When Harry heard this, his eyes darkened. He hadn't even met her yet, and she was already getting on his bad side. He had expected her to show a little more respect to the ancient wizard. *Ministry officials*, he thought with contempt as he rolled his eyes.

“ Thank you Headmaster,” came through the door, “ I just wanted to tell everyone that I am Professor Dolores Umbridge, your new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher. As I have no doubt of what tall tale the headmaster was about to spin, I would like to clarify the matter concerning the return of You-Know-Who. Professor Dumbledore told you at the end of your last year here that he had been given his body back, and I would like to take this opportunity to say that the Ministry rightly believes this information to be false. There is no way that You-Know-Who is a threat, no matter *who* tells you otherwise.”

“ That's all well and good, Dolores, but that wasn't what I was going to say,” Dumbledore interrupted before she could continue.

“ Humph!” was all he got in response as the dumpy witch sat down again. In the side room, the time travellers were trying not to laugh at her indignant noises.

“ As I was saying,” the headmaster continued, “ I have some rather extraordinary news. Over the summer, four students found a highly magical artifact which managed to transport them through time. As you will see when they appear before you, they have grown three

years since you have last seen them, and will now be joining the seventh years for lessons. I ask that you do not question them on their whereabouts as they have been through a lot and may not want to talk about it. It is their story to tell when they are ready, and anyone pestering them will lose House points, as two of their number are Prefects, and as such are well within their rights to punish you. Now, can we please welcome Virginia Weasley, Hermione Granger, Ronald Weasley and Harry Potter!"

Severus pulled the door open and the four strode out into the Great Hall, their coloured robes swirling around their legs. As they stopped in front of the staff table, they were met with astounded looks from most of the other students. As the shock started to wear off, Harry and Ron saw something that made them feel like Christmas had come early.

Malfoy fainted.

He actually fainted.

The loud thump as he hit the ground attracted the attention of everyone in the room, and when they realised what had happened they all started laughing. A considerate sixth year Slytherin thought to send an enervate spell in the blonde's direction, effectively waking him from his faint. As he sat up, a dazed look on his face, the other students laughed all the harder. Harry and Ron actually had tears of mirth spilling over their cheeks. Malfoy turned an amusing shade of red before standing with as much dignity as he could muster and striding out of the Hall, head held high. Once everyone had calmed down, the four time travellers moved over to the Gryffindor table, where they were assaulted by questions left right and centre. Fred and George were delighted at having the founders of the original Marauders in their classes. The thought of gaining Peeves' cooperation filled them with glee. They had tried for years to get the poltergeist to help them with some of their more elaborate pranks, and while the ghost had never given them away, he hadn't helped them either. But now they had Harry and Ron, who were close friends of the ancient fiend, and would be able to talk him into anything.

The fifth year Gryffindors were the most talkative of the lot. Seamus and Dean were relentlessly questioning Harry and Ron about the last three years, such as where they had been and who they had met. The two boys were trying to answer their questions without giving away too much, but it was becoming increasingly difficult. Neville didn't say much, but he sat and listened to everything the four were saying. Lavender and Parvati were continuously asking Hermione and Ginny what boys were like in the times they had seen, giggling when they described people like Caligula Malfoy and Horatio D'Escargot. Anything the two gossips did find out was promptly passed down the table, and soon spread to the girls at the Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw tables. Even some of the Slytherins were talking about it.

Eventually, the feast appeared on the tables, giving the time travellers the chance to pause in their answers and eat the delicious food. When the desserts appeared, Harry and Hermione were called up to the Head table with the rest of the prefects to be given the list of passwords, before they led their Houses back to the common rooms. Hermione enjoyed the experience, telling all of the first years interesting facts about the castle, and advising them of the trick steps they found occasionally. When she started telling them about what the school had been like a thousand years before, when it had first been built, the rest of the Gryffindors crowded around and listened as well. Even Fred and George, who would normally have been pulling off a spectacular prank about now, were engrossed in the tales of Normans, Celts, Anglo-Saxons and Elves. The latter caused quite a stir, as all but a handful of magical folk believed them to be an extinct race. Talk of Lolide and her family made Harry feel nostalgic, and he vowed to contact the elven world as soon as the opportunity arose, giving him the chance to build bridges between the humans and the elves, something he had promised to do three years ago. Eventually, the Gryffindors reached the Tower, and after a brief speech from Hermione about school rules, everyone retired to their dormitories for some much needed sleep.

Monday day saw the four friends up bright and early, each running laps of the quidditch pitch, thankful that their return had been on a Friday, giving them a couple of days to readjust to their own time. Since they had received their weapons training it had been

necessary for them to keep in shape. The better their physical condition, the better their performance in battle, and with an enemy as dangerous as Voldemort they had to have as much of an advantage as possible. After an hour of running and another hour of sparring, they made their way back to Gryffindor Tower for a quick shower. Soon, they were all strolling into the Great Hall and taking their places at their table. This time, they were dressed in the more modern uniforms they had transfigured from their old ones. They still needed to make a trip to Diagon Alley, but that would have to wait until the following weekend. As they started piling food onto their plates, Harry looked around the room and made an observation.

“ You know, I think this is the first time in ages we have been the first down to breakfast.”

Sure enough, every other table was empty.

“ Yeah, but at least we get first go at the food,” Ron pointed out.

“ *Ron!* Is that all you think about?”

“ But of course, my dear sister, what else *is* there to think about?”

“ *Men,*” Ginny grumbled, sending a pointed look to Harry, who was busy shovelling scrambled eggs into his mouth.

Twenty minutes later, as the four were finishing their breakfast, Minerva strolled in with the rest of the teachers and headed straight over to them.

“ I have your timetables, if you want them,” she said as she passed the pieces of parchment out. They all nodded their thanks and looked at the classes they had that day, Ron letting out a loud groan when he realised what he would have to sit through.

“ Can you believe we have Snape first thing today?”

Harry instantly brightened, a grin appearing on his face at this news.

“ That’s brilliant!”

“ Harry, you’re insane,” Ron deadpanned, staring at his friend in utter disbelief.

“ No, I just happen to like Potions.”

“ You never used to when Snape taught us.”

“ But now I understand the subject better, and I find it utterly fascinating. Anyway, Sev can’t take points. A lot of what he knows was taught to him by me. He can’t exactly say I’m getting it wrong.”

“ True, but you’re back to being a Gryffindor now, mate. You’re not one of his Slytherin buddies, and he has to keep up appearances.”

“ True, but at least we don’t have Malfoy in our class anymore.”

Ron brightened at that prospect, and wasn’t quite as somber as before. Getting up, the four of them decided to head back to the Gryffindor common room and find something to do, as they still had an hour before their first lesson. As they slumped into their seats in front of the fire, Ron pulled out his broomstick and started polishing it, while the other three sat down to write. After a few minutes, the red head looked over at his friends with a puzzled look on his face.

“ What are you three *doing*?”

“ Writing,” Hermione muttered.

“ Writing what?”

“ Books,” Ginny answered without looking up. Shaking his head in exasperation, Ron turned back to his broom and started lovingly trimming the bristles.

Hermione, Ron, Harry and Ginny were the first seventh year students to arrive at the Potions classroom, and they promptly wandered in and chose their seats. Although they didn’t know where the rest of the class usually sat, they thought that no-one would complain if they chose the front row. If their previous experience was the general trend, none of the other students would want to sit anywhere near the Potions Master. People started drifting into the room soon after they

set their things up, most of which gave the four rather curious looks. After all, it wasn't every day that people who were supposed to be in fifth year joined the seventh year classes. The Gryffindors grinned at them as they moved to their seats, and the Ravenclaws gave them fascinated looks, as if they were new specimens fit for study. All four of them were relieved that the seventh year Potions class was shared with Rowena's House, and not the Slytherins. It would be nice to be able to get through a whole lesson without malicious sabotage.

Fred and George Weasley sauntered in seconds before Snape, chatting loudly and putting the Slytherin Head of House in a bad mood.

"Weasley and Weasley, *sit down* and *shut up*. I have no time for your interruptions. You have your NEWTs this year, and I will *not* have you disturbing your classmates, no matter *how* incompetent they are. Ten points from Gryffindor."

"But Sir..."

"*Each.*"

The twins took their seats, pouting at the irate teacher and sending him mild glares. All they got in response was a vicious sneer. Harry watched the performance in amusement. While Sev's behaviour in his first four years had been intimidating, now that he knew the man better he could see that it was simply a performance. A very good performance, something that most people couldn't see through, but a performance none the less. As the potion they were making was written up on the board and the students got to work, Harry wondered if he would be treated any better in class than he had been before he left for the founders' age.

Twenty five minutes later, the Boy-Who-Lived finished up the healing draught they were making and placed a sample in a vial. Looking around the room, he realised that he was the only one that had finished. Even Hermione seemed like she would need another quarter of an hour. He felt pride swelling in his chest as he realised that all of the extra time he had been spending researching the subtle art of potion making had paid off. Harry sat still for a minute or two,

trying to decide what to do. He could sit in silence and risk the Potion Master's ire, or he could tell the man he was finished and ask for something else to do. Finally, common sense won out and he stood up, vial in hand, and made his way to the front desk where Sev was looking intently into his own simmering cauldron. The potion inside was a rich royal purple, and had a faint blue mist rising from it, which gave the air in the vicinity a slight tang. Harry was a little disappointed when he didn't recognise it. Coming to a stop in front of the desk, he cleared his throat and waited for Sev to respond.

"What is it, Harry?" the older man asked quietly, making sure they weren't overheard.

"I've finished the potion. I was wondering if you needed a hand."

Sev gave him a penetrating look.

"I don't think you can help. Not unless you can tell me the antidote for the Infierno Poison," he said, a trace of sarcasm noticeable. Unfazed, Harry fixed him with a glare and started to recite ingredients from memory.

"Three unicorn tail hairs, eight thestral feathers, twenty gnats' wings, an ounce of crushed shrivelfig, two ounces of asphodel, ground bicorn horn, three drops of phoenix tears, the tail bone of a crup, and an infusion of wormwood."

Sev looked at him incredulously before fixing a genuine sneer of his face.

"That's not funny."

Harry gave him a level stare and answered seriously.

"It wasn't meant to be."

That obviously wasn't the answer the Slytherin had been expecting. He gave his young friend an incredulous look before questioning him in an astonished tone.

“ And you know how to make it? How to put the ingredients together?”

“ Of course,” Harry said with a frown, “ I know a lot about potions, if you remember. I’m sure I could make something as simple as *that*. The only tricky part is adding the unicorn hair without it reacting with the shrivelfig. If you don’t get the timing exactly right, the whole potion is ruined. What’s the big deal, anyway? It’s just a potion.”

“ Harry, that potion hasn’t been made in over eight hundred years. As far as anyone is concerned, the Infierno Poison has no antidote. If what you are saying is true, we need to go for a little chat with the headmaster.”



## Chapter Eight – A Talk With Sev

The seventh year Potions class was rather surprised when they noticed Harry willingly going up to the Potion Master's desk. Everyone knew that the pair didn't get on during Harry's first four years at the school, so it was a rather shocking development. What was even more surprising to the watching students was the gobsmacked look that appeared on their teacher's face after the Boy-Who-Lived told him something. To them, Snape was a cold hearted individual who never showed even a hint of human feeling. When they saw his mask of contempt and indifference slip and show such a vivid emotion, they realised something was up. When said Potions Master stood up abruptly and ordered them to pack up and leave, the gossip started to fly around. After all, it wasn't every day Severus Snape lost his cool.

Striding down the corridor with Sev, Harry wasn't quite sure what to think. He had been surprised at how astonished his friend had been when he reeled off the antidote to a simple Dark Arts potion. It was one of the things the four time travellers had studied in the past, so he knew how to make the counter potion flawlessly. It was one of the most useful draughts, as it countered not only the Infierno Poison, but also a lot of substances concocted with similar ingredients. He found the fact that the knowledge of it had been lost rather disturbing. In the age of the founders, it was common knowledge, as it was so versatile. The fact that no-one these days could brew it was a little disconcerting.

Harry had stood back and watched in amusement as Sev had stood up abruptly after his little revelation. The older man had extinguished the flame under the sludge he was trying to brew before ordering everyone out of the classroom and hurriedly putting his ingredients away. The rest of the class had sent Harry curious looks before scrambling to clear their things away, the Ravenclaws complaining the whole time about not getting to finish their work.

Once the pair was alone, Sev had gestured for him to follow and swept out of the dungeon classroom, locking it on the way out. Harry now found himself several feet behind the almost sprinting Potions Master as they made their way to the headmaster's office. Harry tried

to ask what was going on, but Sev simply sent him a sharp shake of the head before continuing on his way. When they finally reached the stone gargoyle, Sev shouted out the password and jogged up the moving staircase, knocking urgently on Dumbledore's door when he reached the top. By the time Harry caught up, the headmaster had called for them to come in and Sev had pulled the heavy wooden door open. The pair nodded to the old wizard before seating themselves in front of his desk and taking a few deep breaths. Once they were calm, Dumbledore held up his usual dish of sweets and offered them to the new arrivals.

“Lemon Drop, gentlemen?”

Severus gave him a withering look before stating their purpose for being there.

“Harry knows the antidote to the Infierno Poison.”

The dish of Lemon Drops fell to the floor with a loud crash, but the headmaster didn't seem to notice. Harry watched in amusement as the older man gaped at the pair seated before him. Severus also found his reaction rather satisfying. After all, it took a lot to surprise Albus Dumbledore.

“Y-you're sure?” the old man stuttered, “You're not thinking of a different potion?”

“I know what the Infierno Poison is, Sir,” Harry confirmed, “It's not like I've never made it myself. I don't get it, though. Sev said something about the antidote being lost. I don't see how that is possible, when it was widely used and simpler to make than the poison itself. Surely some record of it has survived...”

“None that we know of,” Severus said with a sigh, “We don't know why the knowledge was lost, we just know that it was about seven or eight hundred years ago.”

“Well, that explains it, at least it does if it's seven hundred years, or even six hundred and fifty.”

“ Why? I’m not sure when it was, but the last record of it was in 1189, but it could have been made after that and not written about.”

“ The only thing I can think of after that that could explain it would be around the mid 14th century.”

“ And why would that be, Harry,” Dumbledore asked with interest. Harry gave them both incredulous looks.

“ Well, think about it. What happened around that time that could be the chief cause of the mass loss of knowledge?”

“ Well, there were several minor skirmishes, a goblin rebellion...” Sev said. Harry rolled his eyes at the apparent gap in their historical knowledge.

“ Did *either* of you take History at *any* point?”

Both professors puffed up at that remark and they each sent the boy reproachful looks.

“ Now Harry, I don’t appreciate your tone.”

“ Sorry, headmaster. It’s just that....I thought you knew everything...”

“ I know a lot, Harry, but I don’t know everything. Now, can you please enlighten us?”

“ Oh, right. Well, in the mid 1300s there was a period known as The Great Mortality. It was a period when the bubonic plague was ravaging the earth. It is less well known than the Great Plague of the mid 1660s, but was more disastrous. Starting in Asia, it spread to Europe quickly; leaving a third of the population dead after it had run its four year course. During that time, whole communities were wiped out, and those who lived dedicated more and more of their time to studying nursing and healing. The magical world was hit as harshly as the Muggle world, if not more so, causing an increase in the study of medimagic. More traditional occupations, such as Potions Mastery, became less popular, as the potions required for medimagic were brewed by the healers themselves. A lot of knowledge was lost at

that time, as many took the information to the grave with them, and others simply did not have the apprentices to pass it down to.”

“ How do you know all this?” Sev asked in astonishment.

“ During my time on the age of the founders, I was placed in Ravenclaw House. While I was there, I developed a love of learning, so I read as much as possible. Surely you remember that from your fifth year, Sev. Whenever I wasn’t teaching you, doing homework or fighting battles, I could usually be found studying.”

“ That’s true. I always thought that was for your assignments.”

“ It was, usually. I spent a lot of time reading up on topics mentioned in class because I found them fascinating.”

Dumbledore thought this would be an appropriate point to break the conversation and cleared his throat. The pair turned to look at him, Sev with an eyebrow raised, and Harry with an expectant look on his face.

“ I’m sorry to disturb this fascinating and informative line of conversation, but I believe we have an antidote to discuss.”

“ Of course, headmaster, I just wondered though....”

“ Yes?”

“ What’s the big deal about the Infierno Poison? It seems a rather...random...and obscure potion to be concerned about.”

“ Harry, it’s one of Shirley’s favourite potions. He likes to use it to torture Muggles and wizards alike. It is always used when dealing with traitors, as it is an incredibly painful way to die,” Severus explained.

“ So, you mean to tell me that Voldie uses this often? And you never knew the cure?” Harry asked with dawning horror.

“ That’s why he likes it so much,” Dumbledore said, “ He knows that once it is ingested, there is nothing the victim can do to stop it. They

know that the poison takes forty eight hours to take effect, and that it causes an incredibly slow death. The mental torture is sometimes worse than the physical torture. Severus has been trying for years to find an antidote, without success. You can understand then why we were so surprised that you knew. If we had thought to ask you in the forties or even the seventies, many lives could have been saved.”

Harry contemplated feeling guilty, but soon dismissed it as ridiculous. Yes, many lives could have been saved, but it had been they who had not thought to ask. If he had been aware of the situation, he would have volunteered the information. It would also have messed with the timelines too much if he had saved the lives of those afflicted with the poison. As he mulled it over logically, one stray thought came to the front of his mind.

“ Um, Professors?”

“ Yes, Harry?”

“ Did no-one think to look in the library at Domus Corvus Corax for the antidote?”

Neither had an answer for that.

Later that afternoon, after a rather lengthy discussion with the headmaster, Severus and Harry found themselves firmly ensconced in the private rooms of the Potions Master. Harry was sipping on a glass of warm butterbeer, and Sev was nursing a glass of port. Neither spoke for the longest time, each lost in his own thoughts. Eventually, Harry broke the silence with a safe subject.

“ I miss the dungeons, you know.”

Sev raised one eyebrow in amusement and a small smile tugged at the corners of his mouth.

“ That’s never the Great Harry Potter missing the Slytherin realm.”

Harry shot the older man a withering look before explaining himself.

“ Sev, please don't call me that. It's strange, you know? In my first year, the Sorting Hat wanted to put me in Slytherin so badly, but I wouldn't let it. I pleaded with it not to put me there, to put me somewhere better. All I had heard since learning about the wizarding world was that Gryffindor was the best, the noblest House, and that all Slytherins were evil Dark Wizards. Ron, my first ever friend, was insulted by Malfoy, who I watched be placed in Slytherin. I never thought I'd find myself missing the place.”

“ You were almost sorted into Slytherin?”

“ It's not that hard to believe, really. I wanted to prove myself to everyone. To live up to the fame, the title I had been given for something I couldn't even remember.”

“ I suppose that makes sense. How did you find the other Houses you were in?”

“ It's the strangest thing. In my first year, the Hat thought I would do well in Slytherin, but by the start of my fifth year, it placed it as the last choice. I think I've changed a lot in the last seven years. As a little first year, I was easily manipulated by those around me. I wanted to live up to my parents' reputations as good Light wizards, and I did whatever I could to prove that they could have been proud of me. Gryffindor was just a step in that direction. I found when I was placed in Ravenclaw in the time of the founders; I fit in a lot better. I learned to like learning and gained a great respect for knowledge. My other personality traits kept me from becoming the perfect Ravenclaw, though. I wanted a life beyond books. Hufflepuff helped me with that. I saw the world through the eyes of the House considered the weakest of the Hogwarts four. I saw what they had to deal with, and gained a healthy respect for them. They may seem weak, and made up of a mottled group, but they are loyal and determined beyond even the bravest Gryffindor. Then there was Slytherin...”

“ What did Slytherin teach you?”

“ That even in the darkest of places you can find your true friends. Slytherins aren't evil, just misunderstood. Much like all Dark wizards.”

“ That’s true. Do you think it did you good, changing Houses so much?”

Harry thought about it for a while before trying to explain how he felt about it.

“ I’m glad I did it. It gave me insight into different types of people, which I think I needed. The only trouble is, I don’t feel comfortable in Gryffindor anymore. They all have such strong prejudices, and I think I’ve changed too much to ever be fully accepted there if I just act like myself.”

“ Harry, you should always be yourself. If they don’t accept you, ignore them. After all, you only have one more year to go. I’m sure you’ll survive. I mean, you managed to survive everything else life has thrown at you, so this should be easy.”

“ Sev, promise me something.”

“ What?”

“ Don’t leave me. If things get really bad in Gryffindor, please don’t abandon me.”

“ What makes you think I would?”

“Because I’m Harry Potter.”

Severus gave his young friend a long look before nodding his head slowly.

“ You don’t have to worry, Harry. You were always there for me, and I’m fully prepared to return the favour.”

“ Thank you.”

The pair drifted into silence for a while, Harry sipping on his butterbeer and Sev refilling his glass. Eventually, Harry asked his friend something that had been bothering him.

“ Sev, what’s Umbridge’s story?”

Severus gave him an amused look and rolled his eyes in a very child like manner.

“ Why do you want to know about her?”

“ Well, she looks like a toad for one thing, you don’t see *that* every day. And she seems too false. I know she’s been sent from the Ministry to keep an eye on Professor Dumbledore, but what does she *actually* do for them?”

“ Well, as far as I know, she’s a Ministry drone with enough ambition that she finally wrangled herself a place on the Wizengamot. How she managed *that*, I will never know. As for the toad comment, I should be taking points for insulting a teacher, but I think, just this once, I’ll let it slide.”

Harry sent the Potions Master an amused smirk before taking another sip of his drink.

“ Do you like her?” he asked casually.

“ No.”

“ Why not?”

“ Because I don’t exactly get on well with the Ministry. They have this habit of wanting to send me to Azkaban.”

“ Well, you don’t have to worry about that, Sev. I’ll never let them take you to that awful place.”

“ Don’t make promises you can’t keep.”

“ Sev, it’s a promise. If they even try it, I’ll sort them out good and proper. I know what happened. I’m familiar with the circumstances. If they won’t listen, I’ll make them listen.”

“ You can’t wage war on the Ministry...”

“ If I have to, I will. They’re a corrupt organisation that has been allowed to get away with far too much. I believe that revolution is in



order. As soon as the situation with Voldie is sorted out, I'm going to delve a little deeper into the situation and see what I can dig up."

" Harry, that's a big task."

" I know, but I believe we need someone in control of the wizarding world that is at least half competent. Fudge is an idiot if he believes that there is no threat from Shirley's forces. And Voldemort would enforce the people using terror. Neither is suitable for the job. I'm not suggesting a monarchy or an autocracy, just a better system than we have now."

" I agree, but you're going to need help."

" Are you offering?"

" Yes."

" Good."

At that moment, their conversation was interrupted by a loud squawk from the corner of the room. Harry leapt to his feet, reflexively taking up a fighting stance. Sev chuckled a little and stood, moving over to where the noise was coming from. As he stopped in front of the wall, Harry spotted a small grate that appeared to have something trapped behind it.

" Sev, what's that?"

" It's an owl chute. As we're in the dungeons, and therefore there are no windows for the post owls to enter through, old castles tend to have inbuilt owl chutes, which are long pipes leading outside. The owl simply enters the chute and I open the grate at the bottom to retrieve the mail."

" Clever. Who's the letter from?"

" I'm not sure," Sev said, looking at the name written on the envelope, his brow wrinkling as he saw what it said, " Harry, it's for you."

" For me? Who would be sending my mail to the *dungeon*?"

“ I don’t know. You’d better open it and find out.”

“ Do you think it’s cursed?”

“ I don’t know.”

Harry tentatively took the letter from Sev’s outstretched hand and looked at it closely. It didn’t look like it had been tampered with, but it was impossible to tell for sure. Taking out his wand for extra focus, Harry started checking the parchment thoroughly for curses, hexes, jinxes and poisons. When he was sure it was safe to open, he pulled the thick yellow parchment from the envelope and opened it up. Harry scanned the content and his eyes widened when he got to the bottom of the page. Sev watched in curiosity at the boy read it over three more times before slumping into a chair. When he couldn’t take the suspense any longer, he sat down opposite Harry.

“ Well?”

“ Well, what?” Harry said in a dazed voice. Sev grew concerned at Harry’s tone.

“ Who’s it from?”

The Boy-Who-Lived looked up and straight into the older man’s eyes. Sev was shocked to see silent tears spilling down his cheeks.

“ It’s from my Aunt Heather.”

## Chapter Nine – The Re-education of Draco Malfoy

Sev sent his young friend a confused look and glanced back and forth between the boy and the letter clutched in its owner's hands.

“Heather? As in Heather Evans?”

“Yes.”

“Isn't she dead?” Sev asked in bewilderment.

“No.”

“Oh. Ok.”

The pair lapsed into silence for a few minutes while Harry regained his composure. Eventually, he took a deep breath and looked at the patiently waiting Potions Master.

“I-I'm sorry, Sev, I just wasn't expecting to hear from her, at least not this soon. You see, when I left the seventies, I'd sent her to live in the Muggle world, and told her not to contact anyone or return to the wizarding world, as she may be recognised. If she had been caught, it would have raised some awkward questions, and I couldn't let that happen. I thought that when I came back, I could track her down if it was possible. To be honest, I wasn't sure if she was even still alive....”

“Well, she is, and that's good. Why are you upset by that?”

“I'm not upset,” Harry said with a frown, “I'm just...surprised...and scared.”

Sev gave him a curious look before asking the obvious.

“What are you scared of, Harry?”

“Family.”

“What do you mean? You have family here, and you met your parents....”

Harry started pacing, wringing his hands in an agitated manner and making Sev properly dizzy.

“ It’s just weird...I’ve lost so many people, my parents, my grandparents, ‘Tea, and Glenadade. Uncle Vernon hated me, Dudley teased me, and Aunt Petunia barely tolerated my presence. Even though I’ve known family, it’s not the same somehow. The Dursleys I knew in my own time, but they despised me. My other family I met in the past, and grew to know them, but I knew that as soon as I got home...I would be alone again.”

“ And the thought that you have someone here that could love you like you deserve is scaring you,” Sev finished.

“ Yes. I mean, I meant to look for her, and my grandparents, but I thought it would take a while, and I could do it on my own terms. Give me the chance to accept the idea, without it being thrust upon me.”

“ What does the letter say? How did she know you were back?”

Harry gained a thoughtful look as he spaced out for a few minutes. After a while, he started to respond.

“ She didn’t say how she knew I was back, in fact she didn’t say much. Just ‘Welcome home’, ‘Hope you can come and visit’ and ‘this is where I live’.”

“ Well, that sounds a little impersonal...”

“ That’s not what made me upset.”

“ Then what did,” Sev asked gently.

“ She signed it ‘Love Aunt Heather’.”

The next day, Harry, Ron, Hermione and Ginny finally had a Defence Against the Dark Arts lesson. They had heard horror stories from the younger students who had been in Umbridge’s class so far, and they all told them the same thing. The woman was a menace. Apparently, she would hear nothing of the Dark Lord’s return, supporting Fudge

fully in his policy of denying what was right in front of them. The whole Ministry was denying the rising of Voldemort at the end of the previous school year. Umbridge was reiterating that excuse in her lessons, it seemed, and Harry had decided he would not stand for it if she tried it with his class. He had been there; he had seen it with his own eyes and been a vital part of the regeneration ceremony. He even had the scar on his arm to prove it. If he had still been fifteen, he may have tolerated her narrow mindedness, but not now. He had seen too much, experienced too many battles, for a toad faced old witch to contradict him and get away with it. As the four walked towards the classroom, Harry was ranting to Ginny about her.

“ If she tries anything, anything at all, I’ll hex her!”

“ Harry! She’s a teacher, you can’t hex her!”

“ Why not?”

“ Because you can’t! Don’t get in trouble because of her, get back at her another way. Be more subtle.”

Harry gave his girlfriend an appraising look and sent her a wry grin.

“ Why Ginny, how positively Slytherin of you.”

The young redhead blushed and wrapped an arm around his waist. Harry smiled at her and slid an arm over her shoulders, pulling her more firmly towards him.

“ Have you heard what the other years have been saying about her, though? Apparently, she won’t teach anything useful. The Ministry’s idea of Defence Against the Dark Arts is sitting copying out of books all lesson. You’re never going to learn anything useful that way. We need to practice spells to perfect them.”

“ I agree. I mean, even if they deny the fact that Voldie’s back, they could at least help the students to learn defensive magic in case they ever face a Dark Wizard.”

“ Ahem!”

“ Sorry, an evil wizard.”

“ Thank you.”

“ No problem.”

The pair fell silent as they reached the door to the DADA classroom. As they entered, they made towards the seats in the middle of the front row, but here halted by a strange noise behind them.

“ Hem hem.”

Turning slowly as one, they stared at the creature sitting behind the teacher’s desk. She was sending them a sweet, sugary smirk and eyeing their close proximity.

“ If you don’t mind, this is a classroom. I don’t expect to see open displays of affection. Please part, *now*,” she simpered.

Harry stared at her in disbelief before sending her a contemptuous glare, removing his arm from Ginny’s shoulder and taking her hand firmly, leading her to a desk. They sat in silence as the rest of the class filed in, Fred and George sitting behind them, and Hermione and Ron sitting next to them. Once everyone was present, Umbridge stood up and cleared her throat, beginning her speech.

“ Welcome, everyone, to Defence Against the Dark Arts. This year, we will be covering magical theory, as the Minister believes you have had poor teaching in this area before. Please, take out your books and read page five. I trust you all have your books?”

Everyone nodded slowly.

“ Good. You have ten minutes to read that, and pages seven and eight. After that, I will be quizzing you on the material. Begin.”

Everyone pulled out their books and opened them to the right page. Harry stared down at the book in disbelief. Raising his hand, he waited for Umbridge to acknowledge him. After five minutes of her ignoring him, he started to lose his patience, and cleared his throat

loudly. She reluctantly looked his way, as did the rest of the class. With a nod for him to speak, Harry started his rant.

“ With *all due* respect, *Professor*, what does exorcising ghosts have to do with Defence Against the Dark Arts?”

She gave him a simpering smile and said sweetly in her high pitched tone.

“ Are you questioning my teaching, Mr. Potter?”

“ Yes, I am,” he said with a frown.

“ And do you think you could do better?”

“ Yes, I do. At least I would teach something useful, like how to defend against Death Eaters.”

“ But Mr. Potter, why would anyone *need* to know that?”

“ Erm, maybe because they’re running around the country *killing* people,” he said, voice dripping with sarcasm. Umbridge grinned maliciously.

“ Ten points from Gryffindor, Mr. Potter.”

“ What! What for?” he asked angrily.

“ Why, for telling lies of course. There are no Death Eaters running around killing people, the Ministry guarantees that.”

“ Well, your precious Ministry didn’t see Voldemort come back did they?” Harry said, his voice steadily rising. Hermione was shooting him warning glances, but he pointedly ignored her.

“ Detention, Mr. Potter, and I ask that you don’t speak any more.”

Harry glared at her, stood, gathered his things into his bag, and walked over to the wall. Everyone, bar the time travellers, watched in amazement as he placed his hand on the wall and muttered to himself, a door appearing before him. He tugged it open sharply, and slammed it behind him. Just before the door swung shut, the time

travellers and the Weasley twins heard a telepathic message in their heads.

I'll get her. I don't know how, but Umbridge is going down

The rest of the week passed relatively easily. Harry's detention was scheduled for the following Monday, and he and Ron were busily plotting revenge, with the help of the Weasley twins, Peeves and Gallatea. They had come up with some rather interesting ideas, and Harry couldn't wait to try them out. The first stage of Operation Umbridge was due to start during Harry's detention, where he would teach her a lesson about insanity. The boy broke out in a grin every time he thought about it. It was set to be the highlight of his week.

The weekend finally arrived, and it was time for the four time travellers to finally take a much needed trip to Diagon Alley. They had managed all week with borrowed books and transfigured robes, but they desperately needed to do some shopping. Hermione wanted to read some modern history books, covering the period after 1976, as they never got to find out much about what happened after they left. They knew the basics about Voldemort's defeat, and the trials of the Death Eaters, but Hermione being Hermione wanted to know as much as she could. Harry also wanted to find some more books about learning Ancient Egyptian. He knew he could just find books in the library at Domus Corvus Corax, but he didn't like removing the books from the castle, and he wanted something to read at night. He had first started learning the language the year before when he saw the prophecy for the first time, but now he was reaching quite an advanced level and found the learning of it quite fun. He was determined to gain fluency before the end of the year.

Saturday morning found all four gathered in the Entrance Hall with Sirius, Remus, the Grangers and the eldest Weasleys. They all wanted to go on the shopping trip, as it would give them a whole day to spend with their children. Sirius was especially eager; as it was the first time he would be out in public since Harry had handed over Peter Pettigrew. The pair was looking forward to spending some quality time together, as they still had a few issues to resolve.



At eleven o'clock, after everyone had arrived, Harry created a door to his room and opened the floo network. One by one, everyone made their way to Domus Corvus Corax, from where they flooed to the Leaky Cauldron. When Harry, Ron, Ginny and Hermione stepped out of the fireplace, the pub suddenly became silent as the patrons stopped what they were doing and stared at the group. The news of their time travelling adventure hadn't remained secret for long, and the Daily Prophet had run a front page story about it the day after they got back. Much of it was speculation, as none of them had told the students much, but the bare bones of the article were truth. Now, the whole wizarding world knew that the four students were powerful enough to take on anything. As the time travellers looked around the room, they could see awe and respect shining in every pair of eyes. This was tinged slightly with fear as Sirius fell out of the fireplace behind them, brushing himself off and grinning at the gathered crowd.

"Hiya everyone! What are we all looking at?" he asked cheekily. Harry shot him a pointed glare before walking out the back of the pub without a word and opening the doorway into Diagon Alley.

Their first port of call was Gringotts, where Harry and Ron immediately went up to some goblins and asked for several duplicate keys to be made. Everyone else was confused as they handed out the keys, Harry to Remus, Sirius and Hermione, and Ron to Ginny and his parents. The redhead also pocketed some other keys he had been given, which he was going to send to the rest of the family. Although the four knew what was going on, they didn't tell the adults as they wanted to see the looks on their faces when they saw the vaults. After a long and twisty journey in the cart, they stood in front of two vaults, one next to the other. Harry and Ron gestured Remus and Molly forward, urging them to open a vault each. The pair, and the other adults, nearly had heart attacks when they saw the piles of gold galleons brushing the ceiling. Harry's vault contained less, but was still sizeable.

"Wh-what's all this?" Molly asked, shaken by the sight of so much money.

“ This is our fortune,” Ron told her, “ Harry and I invented the game of quidditch, and this is a thousand years of royalties and interest.”

Molly promptly fainted, and Sirius looked at his godson.

“ Harry, did you both do the same thing?”

“ Yes, why?”

“ Well, why do you have less in your vault than Ron?”

“ Because I’ve spent more. You know Domus Corvus Corax?”

“ The Order headquarters?” Sirius asked in confusion, not seeing the connection.

“ Yes. I had that built. It’s *my* house.”

Sirius gaped, as did the other adults, and Harry smirked back at them.

“ What? You thought I’d have so much money and not do something useful with it? No, I had Corvus Corax built, and I gave a key to Eustace, my grandfather, so he would have some money after his parents were killed, and I gave Dumbledore a key to use to fund the Order. Did you never wonder where the Order resources came from?”

Remus nodded slowly, “It was you. It was all you.”

“ Yes, it was. I founded the Order, so I thought it best I fund it. I may have less than Ron, but I still have enough to live off comfortably for several centuries.”

“ And why have you given us keys?” Remus asked.

“ Because I want you to help me spend it. I have too much to ever need. In fact, I’m richer by far than the Malfoys.”

Everyone nodded in acceptance and they gathered up pouches full of gold. Molly was revived by Arthur, and helped back into the cart as the boys closed up their vaults.

The trip went well until Harry broke off from the group and started heading to Knockturn Alley. The Weasley parents started to protest, but were silenced by a look from Ginny. Remus sent him a curious look, but chose not to say anything. Sirius, though, grabbed Harry by the arm and spun him around. Harry, though, reacted on pure instinct, throwing his godfather to the ground and kneeling on his chest, pinning him down before anyone could even realise what was happening. Vampire reflexes had their uses. When Harry realised who it was, he sheepishly stood and held out a hand to help his godfather up. Sirius sent him a wary look, but accepted the hand. When he was upright again, he brushed himself off and looked at Harry with a frown.

“ Where do you think you’re going?”

“ Knockturn Alley,” came the response in a matter-of-fact voice.

“ No, you’re not. That’s for Dark Wizards.”

“ I’ll fit right in, then,” Harry countered.

“ Don’t say that, Harry! You’re not evil.”

“ No, I’m not. Sirius, I’m not having this discussion again, especially not here. There are some things I need in Knockturn Alley that I can’t get here, and you know I can take care of myself.”

“ Then I’m going with you,” Sirius said stubbornly.

“ Sirius, what do you think the frequenters of Knockturn Alley will do when they see Sirius Black in their midst. Before, when you were an escaped convict, you could get away with it. But now your name has been cleared, you’ll be hexed within minutes of entering.”

“ Oh, and Harry Potter won’t?!”

“ Of course I won’t, if I hide my scar, no-one will recognise me. The Daily Prophet still doesn’t have a picture of what I look like now, so without my scar I won’t be recognised.”

“ You were recognised in the Leaky Cauldron!”

“ But that was different. Firstly, my scar was plainly visible, secondly, I was with Ron, Hermione and Ginny, making us stand out as a group, and thirdly, people expect to see Harry Potter in the Leaky Cauldron. They don’t expect to see me in Knockturn Alley.”

“ I still don’t like it,” Sirius said with a pout. Harry sighed deeply and looked the man in the eyes.

“ Siri, you don’t have to like it, you just have to accept it. I’m going to Knockturn Alley, and you can’t stop me.”

“ But...”

“ No.”

Harry whirled around and headed in the direction of the dark district, moving to the pet shop to get some snake treats.

The next day, Sirius was still upset with Harry for disobeying him the day before. Harry, though, didn’t understand how Sirius thought he could control his life. He hadn’t been around until Harry’s third year, and then he had missed the years the Boy-Who-Lived had been in the past. Harry was a full grown, legal adult now. He had survived on his own so far, and he didn’t suddenly need to be coddled.

After lunch, Ginny and Harry were heading out of the Great Hall when a smirking figure stepped in front of them, forcing them to stop. Harry glared at the boy in front of him, knowing that this was a confrontation waiting to happen. He had been expecting it since school started, but he honestly thought it would have happened sooner.

“ What do you want, Malfoy?” he asked in a bored tone. The other boy sneered back.

“ I’ve come to challenge you to a duel, Potter.”

Harry and Ginny looked at the Slytherin incredulously. A mere fifth year was challenging the Dual Heir to a duel! Harry had to try hard not to laugh.

“ You have *got* to be kidding, Malfoy! I'll trounce you good and proper!”

“ You shouldn't be so confident, Potter. I have been learning magic a lot longer than you have, and my father taught me a few...tricks.”

“ That's all well and good, but I know far more spells than you.”

“ That remains to be seen.”

By this time, a small crowd was beginning to form around the pair. The rest of the school had also been expecting this to happen, and had been eagerly awaiting a good spectacle. Dumbledore and the rest of the teachers had made their way to the front and were watching carefully in case anything got out of control. Not that they could stop Harry if he decided to do something rash. So far, though, there was no sign of violence. Both boys had noted the presence of the staff, and knew they would have to behave. Malfoy sent Harry a contemptuous smirk, and restated the challenge.

“ Potter, I'm asking you for a duel.”

Harry thought it over and a small, evil grin spread across his face.

“ I accept.”

“ Harry!” Dumbledore interjected. The boy just smiled at the headmaster.

“ Sir, I believe the Wizarding Law Reformation of 1411 stated that any challenge offered by a witch or wizard aged 14 or above, if accepted by someone of or above that age, would be legally binding. The challenge was offered, I accepted. You cannot interfere, and neither of us can be prosecuted for spells performed if they are included in our mutually agreed rules.”

“ Harry, I'm familiar with the law,” Dumbledore said, a little surprised that Harry knew about it, “ But I must protest...”

“ Professor, you can protest ‘till the cows come home, it won’t make a blind bit of difference. The challenge is accepted, and the duel will take place, with or without your approval.”

The rest of the students had remained quiet throughout the exchange, amazed that anyone would talk to the headmaster in such a way. Despite the fact that he hated Harry, Malfoy seemed to be enjoying the boy putting the teacher in his place. Once Harry had finished speaking to the head of the Order, he turned back to his rival.

“ What rules are we playing by?”

“ Everything goes.”

“ Agreed,” Harry said with a smirk. The rest of the gathered students and teachers gasped, knowing the implications. Any spells or forms of attack could be used. The only rule was that there were no rules. Even Unforgivables were allowed, and if one person was killed, the other was immune from prosecution, as the rules were agreed by both parties. It was a rather flawed loophole in the wizarding legal system, but it was something none of the Ministers had ever gotten around to changing, as most witches and wizards didn’t even know about it. Only the well educated and fanatical purebloods.

“ When and where?” Harry asked.

“ The quidditch pitch. Now.”

Harry nodded, and the pair walked out of the door, the entire school following behind them. Once they reached the pitch, they waited for everyone to take to the stands, and Dumbledore the stand up, making sure the proper etiquette was followed. The pair bowed to each other, and moved several paces apart, each taking out his wand and holding it in readiness. Dumbledore cleared his throat and cast a strong shield over the pitch, preventing any stray spells from hitting the students. He then sent up a cloud of sparks, indicating that the combatants could begin.

Malfoy started, sending the strongest curse he could at the Boy-Who-Lived.

“ Avada Kedavra!”

As the green light shot towards Harry, the crowd gasped and started screaming. The boy in question just smirked, waiting for the curse to hit him. When it did, with no effect, the noise from the crowd increased and Malfoy gaped at him.

“ You should know better than to try *that* on me, Malfoy,” Harry said, sending a Jelly Legs Jinx back at the stunned pureblood. Malfoy fell to the floor and Harry started laughing while the other boy reversed the spell. Standing, Draco got a determined light in his eyes, and Harry couldn’t help but think, *let the games begin*.

For a few minutes after that they started sending various Light spells at each other, Malfoy frequently getting hit, and Harry simply countering the ones heading his way with a flick of his hand. Eventually, though, the spells became more powerful, until Malfoy sent another Dark Arts hex in Harry’s direction. It was countered the same as the others, but the blond boy had reset the tone of the duel. So far, Harry had merely been playing with the boy after the initial use of the Killing Curse. Now, though, he was prepared to show his rival how much the other boy had misjudged him. He quickly sent a strong, but legal, pain curse towards the fifth year, catching him completely off guard. Once the curse was lifted, Harry paused, giving his victim a chance to recover a little.

“ What was *that*, Potter?” Malfoy gasped.

“ *That* was a pain curse.”

“ I *know* that, Potter, but that was *Dark Arts*.”

“ Yes.”

“ B-but you’re Harry Potter!”

“ Yes, so?”

“ You’re the bloody saviour of the wizarding world. The Golden Boy of the Light. You don’t *know* any Dark Arts.”

“ Malfoy, I know more Dark Arts than Voldemort.”

“ That’s impossible!”

“ No, it’s not. I had a very good teacher.”

“ Who?”

“ Salazar Slytherin.”

“ You’re lying!”

“ Why would I? Accept it, Malfoy, I’m a Dark Wizard. Not evil, just Dark.”

Malfoy staggered to his feet and started hurling insults at Harry. The older boy soon got tired, and started to mutter to himself in parseltongue. Simbi and Nirah poked their heads out of his sleeves to watch as a ball of energy began to build in their master’s hand. Harry had decided to teach Draco Malfoy a lesson, once and for all, and he had the perfect way of doing so. The blond, in his rant, didn’t notice the building energy in Harry’s hand. The parselmouth tuned back into what his rival was spouting, angered by what he was hearing.

“...and that Weasley girlfriend of yours, I never thought even *you* would sink *that* low...”

Harry’s blood began to boil, and a faint glow surrounded him as his features shifted and became more vampiric. The ball of magic in his hand grew brighter and stronger as well, catching the Malfoy heir’s attention. He trailed off as he saw the seventh year before him, and began to realise that angering him was not a wise thing to do. Before he had the chance to do anything, though, Harry had pulled back his arm and thrown the glowing mass at him. It impacted the boy’s chest, spreading through his system and forcing him to his knees.

Harry strode forwards, eyes glowing emerald green and a faint aura still surrounding his body. He picked Malfoy up by the collar and held him off the ground, right in front of his face. The younger boy whimpered when he saw Harry’s long incisors.



“ Listen, Malfoy, and listen good. I am sick of your self righteous, pompous, superior attitude. You are no better than anyone else, and you are certainly no better than muggleborns. I have suffered your prejudice long enough. You want to be a Death Eater? To torture and kill Muggles? Well, here’s your chance to see what it’s like on the receiving end.”

“ Wh-what have you done to me?”

“ Oh, not much. You think Muggles are inferior? Well, now you get the chance to see what it’s like for them first hand.”

“ Y-y-you made me a Muggle?!” he screeched.

“ Essentially. You are now unable to perform magic of any kind. See how you like it.”

Harry dropped the other boy at his feet and conjured up a piece of parchment and a quill. While he was writing out a quick letter, Malfoy picked up his wand and pointed it at Harry.

“ Crucio!”

Nothing happened. Harry ignored him, and finished his letter. Malfoy stared in disbelief at his useless wand and tried a few simpler spells. None of them worked. He looked up at the Boy-Who-Lived in dismay.

“ How *could* you?”

“ It’s what you call revenge. Enjoy life as a Muggle.”

That said, he shoved the letter into Malfoy’s hand, and the boy disappeared. The crowd started to scream and shout, and Dumbledore made his way down to the pitch. Striding over, he grabbed Harry by the arm and started pulling him towards the castle.

“ Harry, what did you *do*?”

“ I’m re-educating him.”

“ How?”

“ I took away his magic temporarily and sent him to my aunt.”

“ The letter was a portkey?”

“ Yes. He’ll get a taste of Muggle life, and hopefully learn that his father’s prejudices are unfounded.”

Dumbledore nodded and led Harry the rest of the way to his office in silence. The headmaster spoke the password and the gargoyles leapt to one side. As soon as the pair entered the moving stairwell, Harry could sense a mind in the office above. Someone was waiting there for them. As Dumbledore pushed open the door and entered the room, he stopped dead when he spotted the occupant of the office. Harry came around from behind the old man and stared. A boy with messy raven black hair and crystal blue eyes was sitting in front of the headmaster’s desk. He appeared to be only a couple of years younger than Harry, and had a dazed look on his face. Harry stepped forward, looking into the face that seemed vaguely familiar.

“ Who are you?” he asked.

The boy looked at the seventh year and smiled slightly, speaking in hesitant English.

“ My name is Glenadade Harold Potter.”

A/N For anyone wanting to know what happens to Draco in the Muggle world, you can read my story ‘Draco Malfoy’s Two Months in Muggle Land’, story id 1567372.

## Chapter Ten – The Chicken or the Egg?

Glenadade smiled shyly, Dumbledore stared at him in confusion, and Harry fell to the floor in a dead faint. Surprised, Glenadade waved his hand over the motionless boy, effectively enervating him. Harry opened his eyes groggily and looked once more at the new arrival, his eyes widening considerably when he remembered what had happened. After a startled yelp, he hastily sent a very loud mental message to a certain ghost.

‘TEA! COME TO DUMBLEDORE’S OFFICE

Alright, alright, there’s no need to shout. I’m on my way

Hurry!

Why? What’s going on?

Just wait and see

A grumbling Gallatea severed the connection and Harry was once again alone with his thoughts. He wasn’t quite sure what to think. In front of him stood an older version of the little boy he had seen in the painting which hung above the fireplace in Domus Corvus Corax. He had said his name was Glenadade Potter, which was impossible unless....

His thoughts were interrupted by Gallatea floating through the floor in front of him. She had a very annoyed look on her face, and he knew he was in for it as soon as she spoke to him. She only used Anglo-Saxon nowadays if she was *really* mad.

“ Harry James Potter, what makes you think you can talk to me like that? I am *not* at your beck and call. You can’t just order me around, you know!”

“ Er, ‘Tea...”

“ No, Harry, let me finish! Men! Urgh! Why did you feel the need to raise your voice? Hm? It’s not like I wouldn’t have heard you, you know!”

“ But ‘Tea....”

“ Don’t you ‘but ‘Tea’ me! In future, I expect you to show a little more respect for me...”

“ ‘TEA, SHUT UP!”

“ Why, I...”

“ NO, it’s your turn to listen. I’m sorry I shouted, but if you look behind you, you’ll see the reason for the urgency!”

Gallatea sent Harry a poisonous look, and he just glared back at her. Relenting, she rolled her eyes and turned around, a wide smirk appearing on Harry’s face as she did so. The ghost froze when she spotted a worried looking boy standing behind one of the headmaster’s chairs. She slowly turned her head slightly to one side to speak to her ex-boyfriend.

“ Harry, catch me.”

“ Why?”

“ I’m going to faint.”

“ Ghosts don’t faint!”

“ Yes they do! Now, catch me.”

“ I can’t...” he said as the woman crumpled to the floor, gliding through his outstretched hands and coming to rest an inch above the floor.

“ Hem hem.”

Harry and Glenadade looked up startled, but for different reasons. Harry relaxed a little when his eyes met the twinkling orbs of the headmaster, who had watched the whole affair in amusement.

“ Maybe we should sit down and discuss a few things. I’m sure we can fill the Lady Ravenclaw in when she wakes up, don’t you think?”

Harry nodded readily, but noticed that Glen seemed to be nodding to himself with a look of intense concentration on his face, and Harry realised he was trying to systematically work out what the headmaster had said. Switching to Anglo-Saxon, he spoke to the other boy for the first time.

“ Glenadade, did you understand that?”

The younger boy looked up at Harry and hesitantly nodded.

“ Good. How good is your English?”

“ Not very, sir,” he answered.

“ Please don’t call me ‘sir’, it makes me feel old.”

“ What shall I call you, then?”

“ Well, I’m Harry Potter, so I suppose you can just call me Harry.”

“ My father was called Harry Potter,” the boy said with a twinkle of pride in his voice. Harry started violently, now that his thoughts about Glenadade had been confirmed.

“ You are the son of Harry Potter and Gallatea Ravenclaw? Grandson of the Lady Rowena Ravenclaw?”

“ Y-yes. How do you know that?”

“ I’ll tell you in a minute. Glenadade, why are you here? How did you get here?”

“ I...”

“ Hem hem!”

The pair simultaneously looked up at the headmaster, who was starting to look a little irritated at not knowing what they were saying.

“ Sorry, sir,” they said at the same time, earning them a flash of amusement from the old man.

“ I’m a little confused as to what is going on, so I suggest, Harry, that we discuss the matter of Mister Malfoy while we wait for the Grey Lady to reawaken.”

Harry nodded, and quickly translated for Glenadade, explaining briefly what had happened with Draco. The younger boy looked rather amused.

“ What would you like to know, Headmaster?” Harry asked wearily.

“ Why did you accept the duel? It could have been prevented!”

“ No, it couldn’t. It’s been along time coming, and he needed to be taught a lesson. If I had refused, he would have thought me a coward, and I couldn’t let that happen. He challenged, I accepted, he lost. What more is there to discuss?”

“ The fact that he is no longer on school grounds.”

“ Oh, that.”

“ Yes, that. Where is he?”

“ I told you! I sent him to my aunt’s house.”

“ Why?”

“ Because he needs to learn some respect for Muggles, and I thought she would be the best person to handle it.”

“ Will he come to any harm?”

“ Of course not.”

“ How long will he be there? The magic removing spell only works for a day or so, does it not?”

“ Erm...”

“ *Harry?*”

“ I modified the spell a little.”

“ Modified it?! In what way?”

“ Made it more powerful. The effects are the same, but the length of time before the victim’s magic is restored is directly proportional to the amount of power put behind it by the caster.”

“ So, how long will it last?”

“ Well, I was making it for a week, but...”

“ Harry, what did you do?”

“ I didn’t do anything! It’s his own fault!”

“ Explain.”

“ He was insulting Ginny. It made me mad...”

“ And you started glowing.”

“ ...and my power becomes more potent when I get mad....”

“ Strengthening the spell.”

“ ...so the spell will last longer than anticipated.”

“ How long?”

“ About two months.”

“ Two *months*!?”

“ Yes.”

“ Harry, what precisely do you think Lucius Malfoy is going to say when he hears you turned his heir into a Muggle for two months, and not only that, you send him away from school and into the Muggle world when he is completely defenceless.”

“ He can say what he likes. If he gets too bad, I’ll challenge *him*, too.”

“ Harry!”

“ What?”

The arguing pair was interrupted by a groan coming from the floor. Gallatea, it seemed, was coming to.

“ What happened?” she asked.

“ Glenadade showed up,” Harry told her.

“ Oh, right.”

“ ‘Tea, you alright?”

“ Sure, my son of a thousand years ago turns up in the headmaster’s office. No problem.”

Harry went over and knelt next to her, waiting until her head cleared a bit before asking the obvious question.

“ Gallatea, do you know what’s going on?”

“ No, I don’t.”

Harry stood once more and took his place in one of the chairs in front of the headmaster’s desk. Gallatea floated back to her usual height and moved in front of her son. The pair looked at each other for a moment while the confused boy tried to work out what was going on. Eventually, he turned back to Harry for an explanation.

“ Harry, what’s going on?” he asked in his own language. Harry glanced over to Dumbledore and opened a mental connection. Concentrating hard, he managed to set up a link that allowed the headmaster to use the Boy-Who-Lived’s knowledge of Anglo-Saxon to follow the conversation. Harry knew he couldn’t keep it up for too long, but it was the best temporary solution he had.

“ Glenadade...”

“ Call me Glen.”

“ Glen, you need to tell us what happened first. As far as we know, you just appeared here, and we don’t know how.”



Glen settled back into his chair and prepared to tell his story.

“ I had just started my seventh year at Hogwarts. The Dark Queen Lucifina was attacking the school, trying to take it over. She has been fighting the remaining founders for years, ever since my father and Lord Gryffindor defeated her mentor and lover, Salazar Slytherin. She always wanted me, to make me pay for what my father did, and the attack on the school was designed to get rid of me once and for all. Only, it didn't work. She got as far as the Entrance Hall, and managed to cast a strange spell on me. Something I'd never heard of before. The next thing I know, I'm here. Wherever here is. And then you came in, and my...my mother appeared through the floor, and I don't understand what's going on. I...I just want to go home.”

Tears started to fall down Glen's cheeks as he became more and more distraught. Harry moved from his seat and knelt in front of the other boy, pulling him gently into his embrace. Gallatea and Dumbledore watched as father and son clung to each other as if nothing else in the world mattered. Eventually, the two separated, Harry sitting back down and Glen composing himself. Once they were settled, Harry turned to the headmaster.

“ Did you follow all of that?” he asked.

“ Yes, I did, thank you Harry.”

“ Good. I wasn't sure if it would work. I've never used my mental gift for anything but communicating, locating people and knocking enemies unconscious.”

“ I would suggest you explore your gift, Harry. You never know what may happen.”

“ True. Sir, what are we going to do about Glenadade?”

“ I'm not sure, Harry. Do you believe his story?”

“ Of course.”

“ Harry, what's this about his father helping to defeat Slytherin?”

Harry hung his head. He never mentioned his son to Dumbledore, as he didn't want the older man to be disappointed in him. The only ones to know were the ghosts, his friends, and his grandparents and aunt. Everyone else who knew was dead.

"I'm his father."

Dumbledore looked deeply shocked, as did Glen, who understood enough English to pick that up.

"Y-You're my father? Th-that's impossible."

"Glen, did you ever hear what happened to your father? Did Lady Ravenclaw ever tell you?"

"Sh-she said he was a time traveller. That he and his friends had come from the distant future for a year to study, using a magical amulet. She told of his love for my mother, and the defeat of Lord Slytherin. She told me about my mother and her death when I was only small. Gaerwyn taught me some English, which she said was the language of my father. Lolide told me stories as well. I never knew what to think about it, but now I'm starting to believe it."

"Glen, I am Harry Potter," the Boy-Who-Lived told him, "Three years ago, for me at least, my friends and I travelled to your mother's time, using something called the Amulet of Time. While I was there, I fell in love with your mother, and you were the result. She didn't tell me about you until I was leaving, not giving me the option to stay. If I had known about you, I would have remained in her time with her, and married her."

"What happened after that?" Glen asked, fascinated.

"I went to two more times, a time a great war, when my grandfather was a first year, and the time my father was in school. Last week, I came back here, to my home time, and now you have turned up here, surprising everybody."

"So, you're my father?" Glen asked in awe, "It's really you?"

"Yes."

With a grin, Glenadade launched himself at the surprised seventh year, wrapping his arms tightly around his neck as if his life depended on it. Harry returned the embrace, a lump appearing in his throat as he held his child in his arms. He never thought he would get the chance to know his son, the boy he had left behind to be raised by his grandmother. It was one thing Harry had never been able to forgive himself for. Leaving his family. Now, though, it seemed he was being given a second chance. A chance to get to know Glenadade Potter, the first of the Potter line. The other end of Ouroboros. As the pair pulled away, Dumbledore cleared his throat loudly, bringing everyone's attention back to him.

“ I'm sorry to break up this little *family reunion*, but could someone please tell me how this all came about?”

“ What do you want to know, Sir?” Harry asked.

“ You have a son?”

“ Yes.”

“ And you never told me?”

“ You never asked.”

“ *Harry.*”

“ You didn't need to know. It was my business.”

“ I must admit this explains a few things. Professor Trelawney's prediction in 1944, for one thing.”

“ Ouroboros.”

“ Exactly. At the time, you wouldn't explain, but I see it now. You are Glenadade's father, and he is your ancestor. A circle.”

“ One child, born of himself,

Shall end that which others cannot,

Two shall fall, and two shall perish,

While one shall stay to defeat again,  
Born to save, of his own flesh,  
Ouroboros created by the fates,  
To end the darkness for eternity.”

“ Exactly.”

The next hour was spent in the headmaster’s office, catching various people up on what was happening. Glenadade was told about Voldemort, and his father’s time travelling experiences. He was also told about the prophecies and the Potter line’s fate. Gallatea had the opportunity to speak with her grown up son that she had never had when she was stuck at the quidditch pitch. They came to the conclusion that this was why she had never seen him playing quidditch during his seventh year. Because he was here. They also concluded that the spell sent at the boy by Lucifina had sent him far into the future, as a punishment for what Harry did to Slytherin. Instead, it was a blessing. Eventually, the conversation came down to the obvious.

“ How are we going to send Glen home?” Harry asked.

“ Why do I have to go home?”

“ Because you can’t stay here forever. You have to go back and defeat Lucifina. It’s your destiny. You have to have a family, which will carry on the Potter name and eventually lead to my birth. I can’t believe I finally get back to my own time, and I still have to struggle not to change the past.”

“ But, I want to stay here with you, Dad.”

Harry’s heart warmed when he heard what his son called him.

“ You can’t. You have to go back.”

“ I don’t know how.”

“ The only way I can think of is the Amulet of Time.”

“ Harry, he can’t use that yet,” Gallatea interrupted.

“ Why not?”

“ Because I didn’t see him until ages after his sixth year. He must have finished his schooling here, before going back, or I would have seen him. Anyway, if you send him back, Lucifina will just come after him again. Give him a chance to train.”

Everyone thought over this carefully, and realised that it was the only viable solution.

“ He’ll have to stay here, then,” Dumbledore decided, “ Harry, you can take him to Hogsmeade tomorrow to get some supplies, and he can join you in Gryffindor House. It would be best for the pair of you to stay together, if that is alright with Glenadade.”

Glen, who had followed most of what the headmaster had said, nodded his head.

“ Good, that’s settled then. I’ll make the announcement at dinner. Harry, is there any reason to hide this?”

“ No. We know that he goes back eventually, so as long as we protect him while he’s here, it shouldn’t be a problem. The only thing we’ll have to work on is his English. I’ll help him in the evenings. Until he masters it, I’ll help him with a mind link. You do have your telepathy, right?” he asked his son.

“ Yes, I do.”

“ Good, we can share the strain, and keep the link going longer.”

“ You’d best take your young guest to Gryffindor Tower, Harry. I’m sure he’ll want to get settled. We’ll sort out his timetable in the morning.”

The others nodded and the two boys stood, Harry leading his son out of the room and in the direction of Gryffindor.

## Chapter Eleven – Oh, What a Tangled Web We Weave

Silence descended as the two boys headed for the Gryffindor common room. Each was lost in his own thoughts, the events of the day still overwhelming them. Glenadade couldn't help thinking about this unique opportunity presented to him. Not only was he free of Lucifina's constant threat, he also got to see what the world was like a thousand years after he was born. It was a chance not many people got, and he was prepared to embrace his good fortune. For him, though, the best part was getting to speak to his parents. Although his mother had died when he was very young, she was still a big part of his life. He remembered her from his childhood, and had clung tightly to her memory after she was gone. Now he could get to know her as an adult, and she would be able to hear about his life so far. It was very emotional for the two of them. As for his father, for Glen it was a dream come true. When he was tiny, his mother, and later his grandmother, had told him stories of the great Harry Potter, who travelled through time and fell in love, only to be separated from his family. He had always found the stories amazing, only beginning to doubt the truth of them as he got older. Since he was born, he had this perfect image of the father he never knew built up in his mind, and now he had the chance to see how much of it was true. From what he had seen, Harry seemed like a fairly normal teenager on the surface, but Glen could see the weariness and maturity in his eyes. This frightened him, he admitted. It also seemed strange that he was only a year younger than his father. While Harry had been time travelling, he had grown up mentally much faster than Glen, and the ancient boy realised that while Harry was physically only eighteen, he was psychologically much, much older. All Glen could think was that it would be fun to find out more about the man who had sired him.

Harry was having very different thoughts to Glenadade, but no less serious. He was questioning the wisdom of his decision to reveal Glenadade's true heritage and origins. The more he thought about it, though, the more he realised that it was the only real option. He could try and keep it from the students, but he knew from past experience that nothing could remain secret forever. Eventually, someone would find out, and when they did it would be all over the school. If that was the case, the information would be mostly

speculation, and he would have to repair a lot of damage. If he was honest from the start, it would save a lot of hassle, and he would have a reasonable excuse for keeping Glen safe. It would also be better for Glen in the long run, as he wouldn't have to keep his identity a secret. Harry and his friends had had three years of hiding who and what they were, and the pressure had taken its toll. He wouldn't wish that on anyone, especially his own son. That thought sparked myriad emotions in the Gryffindor. His son was here. He could see him and speak to him. His son. Harry felt a warmth inside that he hadn't felt that often. He had a family, a real family, and he was given the opportunity to get to know his son. It was dream come true. With that thought, Harry shook off his other worries. No matter what happened, or what Voldemort did when he found out, Harry would look after his son. He would get to know him, and show him his world. Glen would have a father, Harry was determined of that.

As the two boys reached the Fat Lady, they came out of their thoughts and looked at each other.

“ Ready?” Harry asked.

“ As I'll ever be. What if they don't like me? I'm a Ravenclaw, I don't know if I'll fit in...”

“ I'm a Gryffindor, and I did fine in all three of the other Houses. In fact, the experience taught me a lot. You'll be fine. And remember, if anyone gives you any trouble, especially the Slytherins, tell me. I'll soon sort it out. And if anyone lays a finger on you, they will regret it. Understand?”

“ Yes, Father.”

“ Good. Now, are you ready to meet my friends?”

“ Yes. I've heard so much about them; it'll be nice to finally meet them.”

“ Well, Glen, you have to understand something.”

“ What?”

“ Well, have you heard about Ginny?”

“ The redheaded girl? Your best friend’s sister?”

“ That’s the one. Well...you see...she’s my girlfriend now.”

Glenadade was silent.

“ Look, Glen, son, I’m sorry, but I had to move on. I still love your mother, and I always will, and it was her idea anyway, and...”

“ Dad, it’s alright.”

“ Are you sure?”

“ Yes, I understand. Mother was dead; you have to live your life. I’m sure I’ll like Ginny.”

“ I’m sure you will, too. Let me introduce you, then.”

That said, Harry told the Fat Lady the password and moved the portrait out of the way, leading Glen into the Gryffindor common room. Everyone stopped what they were doing when they spotted the nearly identical boys standing in the portrait hole. Hermione, Ginny and Ron, who were in the corner playing exploding snap, had their mouths gaping open as comprehension dawned on their faces. Ron was the first to regain his composure as Harry and Glen made their way over to their table.

“ Is that....?”

“ Ron, Ginny, Hermione, let me introduce my son, Glenadade Potter.”

Ron fainted, Hermione choked and Ginny let out a small scream. The rest of the people in the common room either gaped at the pair, or started to frantically whisper to their friends. Harry sighed, and turned to the rest of the room. Clearing his throat he grabbed everyone’s attention before addressing them.



“ I know this may seem strange, but I promise Professor Dumbledore will explain at dinner. Until then, I ask that you leave us alone for the time being.”

Everyone nodded dumbly and went back to their mutterings. Ron was revived by Ginny and the Potters sat down at the table. They were quickly joined by the Weasley twins, who were sending Glen evil looks. The younger boy was starting to get a little worried.

“ So, Glenadade, is it?”

“ Y-yes,” Glen replied, using Harry’s newly created mind link to speak English.

“ Where are you from?”

“ I think you mean when,” Harry interrupted.

“ Ok, when are you from?” Fred asked.

“ My mother was Gallatea Ravenclaw.”

“ Wow, Harry, when you said you went out with Rowena Ravenclaw’s daughter, you weren’t kidding, were you?” George said.

“ No, I wasn’t. Glen turned up earlier. Apparently he was sent to the future by the Dark Queen Lucifina, Slytherin’s lover. He’ll be staying here for the rest of the year.”

“ Do you like pranks, Glen?” Fred asked the obvious question.

“ I-I don’t mind them...”

“ Good enough. Well, maybe you can help us. You see, there’s this teacher called Umbridge...”

At dinner that night, gasps could be heard as the two Potters walked into the Great Hall. Apparently, over the course of the afternoon, the news had spread to the other Houses. There was a lot of speculation flying around, and everyone fell deathly silent as Dumbledore stood up to make the announcement. Everyone had been waiting all day to

hear what was going on, and they were determined not to miss a word.

“ Everyone, I have an announcement to make. Today, after the duel, something rather extraordinary happened. When I got back to my office, Harry Potter and I found a young man there. All I will say on the matter is that he is a fugitive from the past, sent forward in time by a Dark Queen. Please make him feel welcome, as he will be with us for the rest of the year. Oh, and incidentally, his name is Glenadade Potter, Harry Potter’s son.”

As the headmaster sat down, whispering filled the Great Hall. It was official. Harry Potter had a son, and he was at Hogwarts.

The rest of the evening went rather well. Glen settled in well at the Gryffindor table, as everyone was trying to be especially friendly to him. It might have been Gryffindor hospitality, or more likely the glare Harry sent to anyone who seemed to be annoying his son. Not even the Slytherins tried to do anything. The loss of their ringleader earlier in the day had had a profound effect on them, and they seemed to be giving the Boy-Who-Lived and his friends a wide berth. It probably had something to do with the fact that the Gryffindor had survived the Killing curse right in front of their eyes, without even flinching. Something like that could gain a person a lot of respect. Harry, though, wasn’t going to mention the immunity necklace he wore around his neck.

Glen’s first night in Gryffindor Tower, he spent the time sitting in bed all night talking to his father through telepathy. Harry was trying to teach him some English, as what he knew of the language was limited. Harry’s use of Glen’s mother tongue soothed the boy, and made him feel less isolated from the rest of his life. Neither boy would have been able to sleep anyway, so they decided that Glen may as well learn something.

The following morning at breakfast, Harry, Ron, Glen and the Weasley twins could be seen at the far end of the Gryffindor table, plotting. Harry’s detention was due to be that night, and they had to go over some last minute details. Glen had proven himself in the eyes of the twins by coming up with some elaborate twists to their

plans for the evil DADA teacher. Umbridge's face the night before at dinner had been a beautiful sight when Dumbledore gave his speech. Although the gossip mill had been working overtime among the students, the teachers hadn't heard about it. Harry knew that she would have gone straight to the headmaster's office after dinner to demand an explanation, as would Sev. Thoughts of Sev made Harry realise that at some point that week he would have to find the time to introduce his son to the Potions Master.

As they headed out of the room for Charms, Harry turned to his son when he remembered something he needed to tell the boy.

"Glen, a word of advice. When we're in lessons, could you please remember to use your wand at all times?"

"Why?" he asked, confused.

"Because in this time, the art of wandless magic has been lost. The only ones capable of it are me, my friends, my Potions Master, and Dumbledore to some extent. Everyone else has to use their wand for every spell, no matter how simple. If the students or teachers see you using wandless magic, it will cause havoc. Even those of us that know it in this time hide our ability, as we know that it would give us a greater advantage in battle."

Glen nodded in agreement, and the group headed to the classroom. The lesson went well, even though Glen had a bit of trouble using his wand for such simple spells. Eventually, though, he got the hang of it. The rest of the lessons that day seemed to fly by as well, until the evening finally came. The evening of Harry's detention.

"Are you sure you're up for this?" Harry asked as he waited outside the door to Umbridge's office.

"I'll be fine, Dad, trust me," Glen answered.

"You know what you're doing?"

"Yes!"

“ Good, I’ll call you when I need your help,” Harry confirmed.

“ Yes, I know Dad.”

“ Right. I’ll be back later.”

“ Sure.”

Harry knocked on the door and waited for Umbridge to acknowledge his presence. It took a good ten minutes and two repeat knockings before she finally called for him to come in. Opening the door, Harry moved over and stood in front of her desk, his arms crossed and a bored look on his face. Eventually, she looked up and sent him a sickly smile.

“ Mr. Potter, how nice of you to join me. Now, sit down, I have a few questions for you.”

Harry fell into the seat behind him and crossed his legs in front of him, looking insolent. Umbridge smirked at him and pulled out a list of questions she wanted to ask him. She set the parchment down in front of herself, and took out a bright red quill.

“ Now, I want to know what you can tell me about that room you disappeared into.”

“ Nothing.”

“ Come now, you know which room I mean. You put your hand on the wall and said something. What room is that?”

“ I’m not telling you.”

“ Oh, yes you are, Mr. Potter, or we will be here for a very long time. What is the password to the room?”

“ There is no point in me telling you Professor.”

“ And why not?”

“ Because you cannot enter it, even with the password.”

“ And why is that?”

“ It’s keyed to magical signatures and handprints. Only certain people can enter it.”

“ Who else, besides yourself, can enter the room?”

“ I’m not telling you.”

“ Why not?”

“ Because you don’t need to know.”

“ I am a professor of this school, and you will tell me what I want to know.”

Harry leaned forward, resting his elbows on his knees and glared at the toad-like woman.

“ Professor, I am not telling you *anything* about that room, so please drop the subject.”

Umbridge stared at him for a moment before continuing her questioning.

“ Very well, we’ll come back to this later. Now, tell me about your son.”

“ You leave my son out of this,” Harry said vehemently, “ He is nothing to do with you, and I will not allow you to do anything to hurt him.”

“ Very protective of him, aren’t you,” she simpered.

“ *Very.*”

“ Why is that? From what I hear, you have never seen him before yesterday. A father at sixteen, I’ve heard, and abandoned the mother to pursue your own selfish gains.”

“ Shut up! You know nothing, you hear me. *Nothing.* Leave my family alone.”

“ Now, now, Mr. Potter, we don’t want you to become angry. It’s not safe for people who are as unstable as you...”

“ I am not unstable!”

“ Anyone who claims that the Dark Lord is running around with his band of merry men has got to be unstable.”

Harry was seething. He thought that this would be the perfect opportunity to get her back. *I’ll show her unstable*, he thought.

Glen, anytime now would be good

Sure, Dad

Harry tuned out Umbridge’s lecturing and started to concentrate on her mind, and the mind of his son. Once they were all linked, both Potters started sending random comments to her telepathically, overlapping them so that she knew there was more than one voice in her head.

Do you see her?

Yes, I do. Is that her?

Oh yes, can’t you tell

Is she real?

Yes, she is, but I’m not sure

Can she eat fish?

I’m not sure

Shall we ask her?

Will she answer?

I don’t know

Dolores, are you there?

Harry tried hard not to laugh when he saw the look on Umbridge's face. As soon as the mental attack had started, she started to look more and more constipated.

"Are you alright Professor?" Harry asked.

I think she's a toad, what do you think?

I agree, definitely a toad

Do you think she's poisonous?

No, I doubt it. Poisonous toads are normally brightly coloured

True, and she's all pasty

What was that?

What?

That? She looked at me!

Umbridge, at this point, was clutching her head in her hands and looking wildly around the room. Harry was sitting in silence, watching in amusement as she tried to figure out where the voices were coming from.

"Professor, you look worried. Is something the matter?"

"Potter! Make them stop!"

"Make what stop, Professor?"

What! She doesn't like us!

I feel hurt

Me too

She'll never get rid of us

No, we're here to stay

"Potter!" Umbridge cried, "Get them out of my head!"

"Get what out of your head?" Harry asked innocently.

"The voices!"

"You hear voices in your head, Professor? Why, that's serious. You should go to Madame Pomfrey about that, you know. Hearing voices is a sign of insanity, after all."

"I am not insane," she screeched, "You are the unbalanced one!"

"Strange, that," Harry said, "I'm not the one hearing voices."

With a cry, Umbridge stood and pointed a shaking hand at the door.

"Out, Potter, out!"

Harry headed to the door and went out, a large smirk on his face. When he saw Glen outside the door still sending messages, he decided to join him in a parting thought.

You'll never get rid of us

We'll always be here

In the day

In the night

When you're awake

When you're asleep

Always



## Chapter Twelve – The Books

The rest of the week passed relatively sedately for Harry and Glen. The ancient boy was settling in remarkably well, which surprised the four time travellers a great deal. They knew from their own experiences that travelling to a different time and being stuck away from everything you know and hold dear is a terrifying experience. They thought it would have been worse for Glen, as he had no idea about the future other than what his mother and grandmother had told him. At least Harry, Hermione, Ron and Ginny had had a vague idea of what they were getting themselves into when they arrived at each time. With the past, it is easier to adapt, as it is a time gone by, and records are left of the way people lived and what they did. Translation spells can be used to understand the people, as it is an extinct language, not one completely foreign. This was the main reason for Glen's mind link solution to the communication problem. A person could use it to recreate a language already in existence, but not one that had not come into use until later. It was a bizarre quirk to the spell, but there was nothing they could do about it. This was only one of the reasons the others had had it easier, though. Glen had to contend with all the other things completely alien to him. While the others' knowledge of the past places they had visited had been limited before, at least they had a basic idea of how things worked. They could deal with inferior technology and old ideals relatively easily. Glen didn't have that luxury, though. Everything about his world was different, and more modern. A thousand years worth of improvements was a lot to take in at once.

Perhaps the greatest change, though, was Glenadade's complete isolation. When the others had gone back in time, they had been alone. Alone in the sense that they were away from everyone they knew and cared about. The only familiar face was Peeves, which did little to reassure them. The key factor, though, was that they had each other. There were four of them, all thrust into the same nightmare world. At least they had each other, though. Glen had no-one. The time was different, the people were different, and no-one he recognised was there with him. Only his mother. In the time after he arrived, Glen found himself spending more and more time with the Ravenclaw ghost. She gave him advice, comforted him when he felt

homesick, and spoke to him in Anglo-Saxon, making him feel more connected to the past. For him, the fact that he got to see his mother again, was a pure miracle.

Another thing that helped Glen settle in, though, was Harry. Glen had been surprised at how quickly his father had taken to him. When he first realised who the eighteen year old was, he had been shocked, but also felt a deep sense of gratitude to Lucifina. While the whole affair was rather taxing on the boy, it gave him a once in a lifetime chance to get to know his father. A chance he wasn't willing to pass up. He was impressed with Harry Potter so far, as he had managed to live up to all of the fantastic tales his mother and grandmother told of him. He was brave, and caring, accepting Glen as his son immediately and taking him under his wing. When Glen had first found out his father was to be in the same Hogwarts school year as he himself, he was worried that the older boy would treat him as just another friend. He was pleased, though, when Harry immediately became protective of him. The Boy-Who-Lived had even gone as far as to threaten his schoolmates to make sure Glen would have no trouble. It was more than he could ever have asked for.

After the initial hesitations, Glen had found himself liking the school. Everything was familiar, but also different. The portraits were mostly new, but some of the originals were still present. He had been allowed into Harry's secret room after the events in Defence Against the Dark Arts, and had even been granted permanent access by his father. He would have to renew it when he got home, but that didn't matter. It was the trust that his father placed in him that made him feel happier. The prank they played on Professor Umbridge had been the highlight of Glen's week. At first, he couldn't imagine pranking a teacher, but after seeing how horrid she was, he willingly went along with it. Now, even after the initial detention, he and Harry still sent her random messages and comments at any time of the day or night that struck their fancy. It was rather amusing to see her drop her spoon in her soup one dinner time and run out of the Great Hall clutching her head. It had kept the Marauders, past and present, amused for ages.

Classes had been confusing for the boy as well at first. Like the ones in the past had been strange for Harry, Ron, Hermione and Ginny, so

these were odd for the ancient boy. He had to learn to use his wand for everything to avoid suspicion. The wand movements for simple spells were completely incomprehensible to him. He had never needed to know basics like that before, as he did them automatically with a simple thought and gesture. He had incantations and wand movements to catch up on what everyone else had been doing for six years already. In his time, such things were only taught for the more complex spells that most wizards needed to use their wands for. The simple ones weren't taught, only demonstrated. They could use incantations to help them learn the spell, but these were usually forgotten after it became second nature. He could understand the need for secrecy in this time, though. In a time of war, any advantage was useful, and if his father's nemesis had no knowledge of the powers of wandless magic, and who had the ability, he would eventually lose. Glen was sure of it.

It was later in the first week, the Friday evening, when Harry met his son in the common room and tapped him on the shoulder. Harry had been planning this for days, and he felt that now would be an appropriate time to get it out of the way.

"Glen, do you have some time spare at the moment, or are you busy?" he asked in the old tongue, so as to discourage eavesdroppers.

"I'm not doing anything specific. What's up, Dad."

"I'm going to visit a close friend of mine, and I would like you to meet him personally. He may have given you a wrong first impression, but I think if you get to know him, you'll find him a good person."

Glen nodded and stood up, following his father out of the common room. Harry started leading them down into the bowels of the castle, and each boy became lost in his own thoughts. Glen was wondering where the older boy could be taking him that was deep in Slytherin territory. Harry, though, was wondering how he would change Glen's impression of one of his best friends. He had been meaning to properly introduce his son to Sev all week, and just hadn't gotten around to it. Thinking back to the first potions lesson since Glen had joined them; he remembered the scathing comments and winced. As

Harry's son, Sev had to treat him in public with the same contempt as Harry himself. Even though he hated doing it, Sev knew his responsibility as a spy was invaluable, and if word was to get back to Voldemort that he had been anything even remotely less than hostile to the Potters, his position would have been in jeopardy. Harry knew this, and had been prepared to put up with it, safe in the knowledge that it wasn't a heartfelt sentiment, just a pretense. Glen didn't know this, though. As far as he knew, Sev was an evil Potions Master.

Eventually, the pair reached the depths of the dungeons and Harry came to a stop in front of the Potion Master's quarters. Knocking lightly, he waited for a response. Glen seemed a little uncomfortable so far from Gryffindor Tower, especially as his experiences with Slytherins had been poor. When the door was eventually pulled open, the younger boy let out a loud gasp and took a step back, while Harry and Sev shared an amused look.

"Can we come in?" Harry asked the older man. In response, Sev opened the door wider and stepped to one side. Harry walked through immediately, but Glen didn't move. He was staring at the school's most hated teacher in shock, a hint of fear evident on his face. Harry sighed deeply and turned to his son.

"Glen, come in. He won't bite, you know."

"Not hard, at least," Sev added with a smirk. This did nothing to reassure the Ravenclaw, but he hesitantly walked in none the less. Sev shut the door firmly behind him, making the younger boy jump a little. Chuckling, the Potions Master led the students into his sitting room and offered them both seats. Once they were all cosily ensconced in front of the fire, a drink in their hands, Sev opened the conversation.

"So, what have I done to deserve the presence of not one but two Potters in my rooms?"

Harry smirked and turned to his old friend, gesturing to his son, who was looking decidedly uncomfortable.

“ I thought it was high time I properly introduced you to Glenadade. I mean, he’s been here a week, and I haven’t brought him to see you yet.”

“ Yes, I was wondering when you’d get around to it. I’ve been...intrigued by him, I must admit.”

Turning to the unsure looking boy, Harry gestured at Sev.

“ Glen, I want you to properly meet our Potions Master Severus Snape. Despite appearances, he’s not as much of a snarky bastard as he makes out. I got to know him when he was in his fifth year at Hogwarts. One of the times we visited was the school year of 1975 to ‘76. We were both in Slytherin House, and I sort of taught him how to take care of himself. Not long after we got there, the pair of us were inseparable. I didn’t tell him my real surname until the day before I left, because there has been what I suppose could be classed as a blood feud between our families for generations. What we did was to reunite the Snape and Potter families. It’s quite amazing, really. I just thought it would be nice for you to meet the man behind the mask. The man he really is, rather than the one he shows to the rest of the world.”

Glen eyed the Potions Master warily, taking in his relaxed demeanor, and the slightly amused look on his face. He looked as if he wanted to burst out laughing any minute.

“ Wh-why are you different here, Sir?” he asked the man hesitantly. Sev sighed deeply before looking at Harry for confirmation that he could trust the boy. When he received a slight nod in answer, he explained in detail the events leading up to and after his becoming a spy. Glen was horrified at all the professor had been through, and his respect for the man rose several notches. The three chatted amiably for a while after that, until Sev raised an issue he had meaning to ask the Boy-Who-Lived about.

“ Harry, can I ask you about the potion you promised to brew for me?”

“ The antidote to the Infierno Poison?”

“ Yes. When are you going to brew it for me?”

“ Would you like to brew it?”

The Potions Master’s eyes lit up at the prospect of being the first person in eight hundred years to create a potion long forgotten.

“ You mean it?”

“ Of course.”

“ But, you know the recipe, and the directions....”

“ I’ll tell you what, hang on a minute.”

Harry closed his eyes and concentrated hard on picturing the books he had written over the years he was in the past. Several minutes later, a thumping could be heard on the doors to Sev’s quarters. The older man, realising that Harry had summoned something, waved his hand, allowing the door to fly open for a minute, before closing again. Through the briefly opened gap flew six thickly bound books. They landed, one by one, on Harry’s lap, and he in turn passed them to Sev. The other man took them carefully, noting that some of them looked to be several hundred years old. They had preservation charms on them, but the style was distinctly old fashioned.

“ What are these?” he asked.

“ Books I wrote over the four years I was in the past. I have one on Light potions, one on Dark potions, one on antidotes to Dark potions, one to antidotes to Light potions, and two on ancient Dark Arts. I thought you might like to read them. They all contain things long lost to us, and are written concisely, without all of the usual rambling by overenthusiastic authors. When you’ve finished with them, just pass them on to the headmaster. I’m sure he’d want to read them.”

“ I...thank you, Harry.”

“ You’re welcome. The antidote to the Infierno Poison is in the Dark potions antidotes book, page 83.”

“ I’ll take good care of them.”

“ I know you will, Sev. I know you will.”

The next big highlight for the Potters came the following Wednesday. After much debating on the elder's part, they had come to the conclusion that it was time for a trip to Harry's Aunt Heather. The only problem was a certain blond Slytherin who had been sent there a week and a half previously. Harry had known at the time that he would eventually have to face Draco Malfoy, but he wanted to put it off as much as he could. He knew he had been reasonably justified in what he had done; he just didn't know how the younger boy would take the Boy-Who-Turned-Him-Into-A-Muggle arriving on the doorstep. As a form of peace offering, Harry decided it would be best to take Draco's possessions with him, to make him feel slightly more at home in the Muggle world. Getting hold of them hadn't been a problem, as being best friends with the Head of Slytherin House had its advantages.

And so, the Wednesday afternoon of the third week of term found Harry and Glenadade Potter on the doorstep of one Heather Evans. Glenadade was shuffling back and forth, looking in amazement at all of the Muggle things around him. He was fascinated for a different reason to why Draco had been. He had experience with Muggles in his own time, but he had never expected the technological advances in the magicless people that he was now experiencing. When Harry had first suggested the trip, he had been curious. They both had a free period on a Wednesday afternoon, so Harry had decided it would be the perfect time for the pair to drop in on Heather. Glen had been dubious, claiming that he had already met so many of Harry's friends in the past that he wasn't sure he was ready for this. Harry had explained, though, that this was family, and it was very important to him.

When the door opened, a middle aged woman smiled back at them. The recognition in her eyes was apparent when she noticed Harry, and she stepped forward to give the older boy a hug. Glancing over at her nephew, she raised an eyebrow and nodded towards Glen. Harry answered with a nod and a proud smile. Heather then turned and embraced the younger boy, much to Glen's surprise.

“ Hello, both of you, it's wonderful to see you.”

“ It’s nice to see you again as well, Aunt Heather.”

“ Please, come in and make yourself at home. I’ll get some refreshments.”

The boys followed the ex-Obliviator into the house and made themselves comfortable in the living room. A few minutes later, she came back with a tea service and a plate of assorted home baked biscuits.

“ I’m sorry this is all I have, but I wasn’t expecting visitors.”

“ That’s quite alright, Aunt Heather. We did drop in unexpectedly.”

“ That you did, Harry. Now, are you going to introduce me to this handsome young man?”

Glen blushed bright red as his father sent a smirk his way.

“ This is my son, Glenadade Harold Potter. A couple of days after we got back from the past, he just appeared in Dumbledore’s office. He’s staying for the rest of the year, and then we’ll try and send him home.”

“ I see, very interesting.”

“ Yes, but it’s given us the opportunity to get to know each other, so we’re both happy. I have a question for you, though.”

“ What’s that, Harry?”

“ How did you know my friends and I were back?”

Heather smiled wryly, and winked at him.

“ I saw you in Hogsmeade. When I go into the wizarding world, I wear a disguise so nobody recognises me. I don’t do it very often, but sometimes there are things I need. That day, I was coming out of Honeydukes and the four of you apparated into the village right in front of me. You looked at me, and I knew straight away who you were. I didn’t want to break my cover, or confuse you when you had



obviously just gotten back, so I just went straight to the Three Broomsticks to floo home. I sent you a letter soon after. I know I should have waited for you to contact me, but I just wanted to see you so much. I still get the Daily Prophet sometimes, so I knew about the whole Boy-Who-Lived thing. I knew from the newspaper that Lily had had a son called Harry, and I assumed it was you. Now I see I was right."

"I remember that. We were considering obliterating you, but decided not to. I never realised it was you."

Before Harry could continue, a door burst open and a black and white blur came flying towards him. Before he could do anything about it, a fist landed sharply on the side of his face and he was sinking into unconsciousness.

### Chapter Thirteen – Heather's House

Glen watched in horror as a boy, younger than he and his father, and covered in what appeared to be flour, walked through the door from the kitchen. As soon as he saw him, he knew who it had to be. Draco Malfoy. His father had told him all about the events of the day he arrived, including what he had done to his school nemesis. If this was indeed the same boy, Glen knew that the situation would only get worse. He watched apprehensively as the expression on the blond's face turned from curiosity to shock, and finally to anger as he watched Harry talking away to Heather. For Glen, everything seemed to go in slow motion as the young Slytherin lunged forward and landed a hard punch on the side of Harry's face. Heather leapt up, screaming, and Glen shook himself out of his stupor and got up to help. Rushing forward, he ran over to where Draco was sitting on the unconscious seventh year's ribs, punching him repeatedly. With a great deal of effort, Glen managed to grab the enraged blond and drag him away from Harry. With a wave of his hand, the ancient boy cast a quick enervate on his father, before punching the downed Draco firmly in the ribs.

As Harry slowly regained consciousness, the first thing he noticed when he opened his eyes was the cloud of white powder floating around in the air. With a slight frown marring his forehead, he reached up and captured some of the substance in his hand and brought it to his lips, touching it tentatively with his tongue. With a slight grimace, he recognised what it was.

"Flour?" he whispered to no-one in particular.

"Harry! You're awake! Thank Merlin," came Heather's voice, drifting over from his left. Turning his head cautiously so as not to make himself any more dizzy, he looked up at the stricken face of his aunt.

"Aunt Heather? What's going on?"

"Harry, you need to get up. Draco and Glen are going at it and I don't want to try and stun one of them incase I hit the wrong one."

"*What?* What would it matter who you hit?"

“ Because it’s rather one sided. If I hit Draco, I’ll just be taking away his way of defending himself.”

“ *Riiiiight*, so I’m assuming Malfoy was the one to hit me.”

“ Yes.”

“ And Glen attacked him....”

“ Yes, in retaliation. Draco was punching you repeatedly, and Glen dragged him off.”

“ That would explain why I feel so dizzy. Why doesn’t Glen just use magic?”

“ I don’t know. But if you don’t do something fast, this is just going to get worse. They both need medical attention as it is, as do you.”

“ Oh, alright! Help me sit up.”

Heather willingly held out her arm, and Harry grabbed on tight. As Heather pulled, the boy pushed with his other arm and was soon leaning against one of the armchairs. From where he was sitting, he could see what was going on. Flour filled the air, from where it originated he couldn’t yet tell. The furniture was upturned, and the tea service lay smashed on the carpet. On the other side of the room, Draco and Glen were rolling around on the floor, trying to strangle each other. With a huge sigh, Harry gathered what was left of his strength and pointed a hand at each of the boys. With a muttered ‘stupefy’, two beams of red light headed for the jumble of limbs, one hitting each of the two quarreling boys. Immediately, they fell to the floor, limp, and Harry, with a smile on his face, drifted once more into unconsciousness.

The next time Harry woke up he was lying on his back next to the prone forms of Draco and Glen. Pushing himself up slowly, he waited for the room to stop spinning before taking a tentative look around. From what he could gather, he was on a large double bed in what appeared to be Heather’s bedroom. His location was confirmed when his worried looking aunt came into the room carrying a bowl of

warm water and several cloths. As soon as she saw Harry was awake, some of the tension disappeared from her face.

“ Harry, thank Merlin! I was so worried! How are you feeling?”

“ A little disorientated, and dizzy. It’s starting to pass, though. What happened?”

“ You don’t remember?”

“ I remember being hit on the temple. Then nothing for a while, before I was woken up. Glen and Malfoy were fighting....”

“ That’s right. Do you remember what happened after that?”

“ I....stunned them?”

“ Yes, then you fell unconscious again. That was three hours ago. The other two are still stunned, but I’ve managed to stop the bleeding. Are you any good at medimagic?”

“ I have some experience with elven spells, and they’re more advanced than those of wizards. I’ll see what I can do.”

“ Harry, are you sure you’re up for this?”

Harry sat back a moment and fully assessed how he felt. He was slightly queasy from the blow to the head, but he could feel his vampiric healing ability slowly repair the damage done by the blond Slytherin. His bruises were nearly all faded, and his cuts were healing over nicely.

“ I’ll be fine in a couple of minutes. I think I’m well enough to treat these two, though. What exactly are we dealing with?”

“ Well, they’re still stunned, as I thought it was best *you* undid the spell. I don’t know what their reaction is going to be when they wake up, so I thought it best that you were awake to deal with it,” Heather explained.

“ Good point. Malfoy was the one who attacked me, so I’m going to sort him out last. Let him suffer a bit first.”

“ Harry!”

“ What?”

“ You can’t take that attitude!”

“ I can and I will. Heather, he punched me!”

“ Yes, but you can see why he’s angry at you. He’s had his magic taken away from him, and was thrust into a world that is completely alien to him. How did you *think* he was going to respond to that? You knew when you came that he would be here.”

“ Aunt Heather, I don’t think you quite get it. Do you know why I was out so long?”

“ Because he hit you in the head?”

“ Heather, he didn’t just hit me in the head. He hit me in the temple. Hard.”

“ Oh...”

“ I was out so long because he nearly killed me! I can feel it. I knew as soon as I woke up. When you told me how long I had been unconscious, I knew what had happened. My vampiric healing means that I should regain consciousness within minutes of being knocked out. I think that if I had been fully human, the blow would have killed me.”

Heather was shocked. Harry could hear it in her voice when she spoke.

“ B-but he didn’t hit you that hard...”

“ No, but he *did* hit me in the temple.”

“ No wonder Glen attacked him.”

“ I know. I need to have a word with my son about this. And Malfoy. But I’ll sort their injuries out first.”

That said, Harry levered himself off the bed and slowly made his way over to his son. When he was standing next to him, he held his hands over the prone form and started to mutter to himself in the elven tongue. A soft light grew around the boy, and Harry started to frown as he chanted. When he stopped, he turned to an awed Heather.

“ He’s got three cracked ribs, a fractured ankle and a large quantity of cuts and bruises.”

“ That sounds quite bad...”

“ It could be worse. He’s tough, fortunately.”

Harry stretched his hands over the named areas and changed the chant. Intermittently, he would pull various herbs and potions out of his pocket, which he would administer as necessary. Finally, after treating both of the unconscious boys, he fell back in his chair and rubbed his eyes in exhaustion.

“ It’s done.”

Heather came over with the now cool bowl of water and mopped the sweat from her nephew’s forehead. When she was finished, she noticed he had fallen asleep, and levitated him onto the bed next to the others. That done, she reheated the water with a muttered spell and washed the blood from all three boys as she waited for them all to wake up.

The next time Harry opened his eyes, it was dark in the room. The curtains had been drawn and the lights were all switched off. With a simple thought, Harry filled the room with a faint glow, showing him his surroundings more clearly. The events of the day came back to him when his gaze landed on Draco. With a sigh, he created a mental connection to his aunt.

Aunt Heather?

Harry?

Yes. Could you come up here, please, I would like to revive these two

Alright, I'll be there soon

As Harry was waiting, he felt a slight movement on his wrist. Looking down, he spotted the small head of Nirah peeking out of his sleeve.

Are you alright, Nirah? he asked the snake.

I am fine, Master, as is Simbi. We were just wondering what had happened

A minor dispute, that's all

But you were hurt

Yes, but I'm fine now. I just met up again with Draco Malfoy. You know, the one whose magic I took away...

I am not surprised he attacked you! I dread to think what would happen to Simbi and me if we lost our telepathy. It is part of who we are, as magic is a part of who he is

I know what you're trying to say, but he needs to be taught a lesson...

Yes, he does, but are you sure this is the way to do it? From what I can see, there are two possible outcomes to this situation. Either he will learn about Muggles, as you hope, and realise the error of his ways. Or, he could turn his anger at you into a hate so intense it will consume him. Simbi and I fear that over the next two months, you will either find yourself with a tentative ally or neutral player, or a new Dark Lord in the making

What!!!

We believe that his fear of the unknown could be his undoing. The fear will turn to anger, that his anger will turn to hate. Hate will turn to the suffering of others. Hate inevitably leads to the Dark Side

Yes, Master Yoda, I get the point

Yoda? Nirah asked in a confused tone. Harry simply rolled his eyes and looked up at the doorway, where Heather was standing, trembling. Without a second thought, Harry leapt from the bed and ran over to her. She immediately let out a light scream and fled to the corner of the room, where she curled up in a ball and started to rock. Harry knelt down beside her, but she flinched violently when he tried to touch her. Unfortunately, Harry heard moans coming from behind him. Looking back, he noticed that the two other boys were groggily sitting up. The stunning curses had worn off.

“What’s going on?” Draco asked the room in general.

“Shut up, Malfoy,” Harry said, venom in his voice. This only served to frighten Heather more.

“What’s going on, Dad?” Glen asked. Draco eyed the boy next to him in shock.

“Dad?!”

“Yes, he’s my dad. Now shut up.”

Draco snapped his mouth shut and watched the events in front of him unfold. Harry reached once more for his aunt, but she shrank back even more. When he got close enough, he could hear what she was muttering to herself.

“No, please, no, I’m safe here, He can’t get me, no, it’s not real, He’s not here...”

“Aunt Heather, it’s me, Harry. Voldemort isn’t here, you’re safe.”

After a little coaxing, Heather finally looked in her nephew’s direction, horror etched on her face.

“You’re like Him. Just like Him. Talking just like Him. He’ll come, come and get me, he will. Some day. I’ll never be free. Never.”



When Heather burst into sobs, Harry did the kindest think he could. He muttered a deep sleep charm, releasing her temporarily from her torment. With a huge sigh, he stood up and faced the confused boys on the bed.

“ Come downstairs, you two, I think there are a few things we need to discuss.”

Once they were all settled in the recently repaired living room, Harry conjured up some tea and biscuits for them all. After a moment of awkward silence, Draco spoke.

“ Well, Potter, what was all that about?”

“ Aunt Heather, as you will know by now, was captured by Voldemort. When I rescued her, I promised she would be safe from him. When she came upstairs just now, I was talking to one of my pet snakes. The parseltongue must have made her suffer a flashback. I don't know how I'm going to fix this...”

“ Well, you certainly seem to be making a mess of people's lives at the moment, Potter,” Draco sneered, “ If I didn't know that your Gryffindorish sense of honour would prevent it, I would say you were doing it on purpose.”

“ You don't know what you're talking about, Malfoy.”

“ Really? Well, from what I can gather, you've just scared away the only relative you have that actually loves you. Great going, Potter.”

“ Shut up!”

“ And what's this about a son?” Draco continued, “ Where did *he* spring up from? Been putting it about a bit on your travels, have you Potter? Been getting young harlots pregnant? And at such a tender age...”

Harry couldn't take it any more. He leapt to his feet and pointed his hand at Draco, throwing a pain curse his way. The Slytherin dropped to the floor, screaming as the pain wracked his body. Glen watched on in horror as his father tortured his school enemy. After a few

minutes, Harry dropped the curse and stared at the wheezing boy on the floor. Draco simply opened his eyes, and smiled a little, despite the pain.

“ You know...Potter,” he gasped out, “ You pretend to be...all high...and mighty...the saviour of the...bloody...wizarding world...but deep down...you’re the same as your...enemy. A Muggle torturer...just...like...Voldemort...”

That said, the Malfoy heir dropped into unconsciousness. Harry’s expression changed from satisfied to concerned, and finally he paled and stared in shock at the body at his feet. How many times had he seen this before? How many victims of the Death Eaters had he seen on the floor in front of their torturers, both in reality and in visions? Muggles lying broken at their feet. Just. Like. Draco. Harry looked up at his son, and hated what he saw. Shock, disappointment, and fear were etched into his face. Fear. His son feared him. Harry couldn’t bear to see that.

He fled.

## Chapter Fourteen – Absence Felt

Glen didn't know what to do after Harry had left. The whole thing had been so sudden. He was still trying to take in what had happened in front of him. Heather was in bed, recovering from her panic attack, Draco Malfoy was on the floor unconscious, and Harry had run off, severing the constant mental connection he had with his son. This left Glen standing in a strange house with people he didn't really know, and no idea where he was. Thinking hard and coming to a decision, he walked out of the house and down the street, looking for any sign of where he was. Harry had apparated the pair of them to the small town, as Glen still couldn't apparate on his own. While his father was teaching him, he couldn't do it alone without splinching himself, and he wasn't very accurate when trying to reach a certain destination. He also had the problem of his English. While it had improved since he had been there, he still couldn't speak it on his own with much competence. Now that he had lost the mental connection with his father, allowing him to use Harry's knowledge of the language, he was practically unable to communicate. Added to this was the fact that the modern Muggle world was vastly different to that of his own time, and naturally he was beginning to panic.

Standing in the street wasn't doing Glen any good, but there wasn't a lot he could do about it. Without knowing where he was, he couldn't make a portkey, and he didn't have an owl to send a letter with. He didn't want to go back to Heather's house, as he didn't know if she was connected to the floo network, and if she was he would likely need to ask her to lift some wards. Heather had good reason to be paranoid, and if she did have a fireplace, it would be heavily guarded against anyone who wasn't supposed to be there. He couldn't walk, for he knew from what Harry had said that they were in southern England, and that was several hundred miles from Hogwarts' Scottish location. Eventually, he realised that standing there wasn't doing him any good, and he had to try something. Coming to a decision, he raised his hand to send sparks up, in the vain hope that a witch or wizard would see and come to investigate. He was slightly worried about what the Muggles would think, but knew from Hermione that they would likely be passed off as something the Muggles called 'fireworks'. Just before he cast the spell, there was a loud bang, and a large neon pink blob appeared in the quiet street. Glenade leapt

back in shock, falling onto the ground and staring in awe at the humongous contraption. He was a little concerned when the side appeared to open, and a pink uniformed wizard stepped onto the pavement.

“ Welcome to the Day Bus, emergency transport for the stranded witch or wizard. Just stick out your wand hand, step on board and we can take you anywhere you want to go. My name is Reggie Macmillan; I will be your conductor this afternoon. Any journey is only eleven sickles, thirteen with a cup of hot chocolate.”

As the Day Bus conductor reeled off his practiced speech, Glen was trying very hard to understand the words. From what he could gather with his limited understanding of English, this was a form of transportation that would take him anywhere he needed to go. Eleven sickles had also been mentioned, so the ancient boy pulled out a small pouch his father had given him and extracted the right amount of money. Handing it over, he strode on the bus and took a seat in one of the comfortable armchairs. Much to his dismay, Reggie followed him.

“ So, where will you be wanting dropped off?”

Glen stared at him blankly, not understanding. Reggie eyed him for a minute before making an observation.

“ You ain’t from around here, are you?”

More blank staring started to frustrate the man, and he continued to mutter to himself.

“ Well, he must know some English, or he wouldn’t’ve given me the right money. Maybe he’s a foreigner, or summat. I know! Err, how did you say it? Um...right! Yes, I know. What destination? You know, place to go? Erm...Are you going home? Ah, err...Quid domus?” he asked Glen. At the garbled Latin, realisation sparkled in Glen’s eyes.

“ Hogwarts.”

“Hogwarts, right. So you know Latin, then. That helps. Not that mine’s any good. Just remember a bit of it from school. Erm....Dimidium hora....erm....supervenio.”

While Glen realised that this man didn’t know much about Latin, he understood what he was trying to say, and appreciated the effort. He smiled as he realised that there was a way he could communicate with the modern wizarding community without the help of his father. Although Latin wasn’t used as much in this time as it was in his own, all witches and wizards had a basic knowledge of it, as it was used for the incantations of their spells. He smiled at Reggie and nodded his head, indicating his understanding, before looking out of the window as the countryside sped by. It was a bizarre sight, but he sat back and relaxed, enjoying the ride.

When the Day Bus finally pulled in at the gates of Hogwarts, a relieved Glenadade jumped down onto the ground and thanked Reggie, before making his way up the path to the school. As soon as he entered, he headed up to the headmaster’s office, where he found the old man sitting in his chair. When Dumbledore spotted Glen, he knew immediately that something bad had happened.

“Come in, my boy. Sit down. You look as if you’ve seen a ghost.”

“I may as well have,” replied Glen in Latin. Dumbledore looked at him in confusion, before asking in the same language:

“What happened?”

“My father’s gone.”

“What do you mean, gone?” Dumbledore said in surprise.

“I think we should call the others here. It might be easier.”

“Go ahead then.”

Glen smiled and nodded, thankful that at least Dumbledore was competent in the ancient tongue. Concentrating hard, he created a mind link to anyone he thought this would concern.

Please come to the headmaster's office immediately. There's something we need to discuss

A few moments later, Gallatea and Peeves floated through the door together, followed closely by Ron, Ginny, Hermione and Severus. After a few more minutes, the fireplace turned green and Sirius and Remus stepped out, looking around the room at the gathered people in confusion.

"What's going on?" Sirius asked.

"I think our young Potter Junior will be explaining that," turning to Glen, the headmaster addressed him in Latin, "Glenadade, can you create a mind link with any of us so you can speak English?"

"I may be able to do it with my mother. I have never had to do it on my own before, only stabilise my father's connection. I can try, though."

"Very well. We will wait."

Glen turned to his mother, and quickly explained what he needed in Anglo-Saxon. Nodding her head, she closed her eyes and waited for her son to do the same. After a few moments, they opened their eyes and Glen turned back to the rest of the room.

"Did it work?" he asked in English.

"Indeed," Sev said with a raised eyebrow. Glen let out a sigh of relief before beginning his explanation. He summarised the trip to Heather's, reluctantly revealing to a shocked Dumbledore that the woman was still alive. He hadn't wanted to do that, but he knew that the old man would eventually get the whole story out of him if he left bits out. Anyway, there was no other way of explaining his father's absence. When he was done, he waited for someone to break the silence.

"So, he's slipping again," Ginny said, finally.

"What do you mean, slipping again?" Sirius asked.

“ Don’t you remember what he was like at the start of your fifth year? He was still recovering from our capture, and he was letting his anger get the better of him. After he was bitten by that vampire, he was never the same. Remus had to talk him around last time, because he was becoming depressed.”

“ I remember that,” Remus said, “ He was in a really bad state.”

“ I still think it’s all the Dark Arts he uses,” Hermione suggested, “ I mean, he was never like this before we went into the past.”

“ But is it the Dark Arts or the experiences with time travel that have changed him?” Sev asked.

“ What do you mean.”

“ What I’m saying, Mr. Weasley, is that all four of you have been through a lot over the last few years. From what Harry has told me, you had to fight in several wars, take part in battles, suffer capture by the enemy, and have lost a number of people you care deeply about. You have all suffered a lot, and while you three seem to have come out of the experience relatively unscathed, although you have matured way beyond your years, Harry has had a slightly different reaction. He has experienced the same things as you, but with the added emotional strain of learning about his heritage, having a son that he had to leave, parting from a woman he loved, dealing with the weight of the world on his shoulders, facing the deaths of his great grandparents, and being turned into a dark creature. This is sure to have had a profound effect on him.”

“ Yes, but would he really have changed this much if he hadn’t been using Dark Magic?”

“ It is difficult to say, Miss Granger, but I believe you can’t fully blame the magic he uses. He always told me that magic is magic, and that it is the intent that makes it evil. I have been using it for twenty five years, and while I have changed over that time, I have no aspirations of becoming the next Dark Lord. If Harry is changing, it is of his own accord. Events surrounding him are pushing him to this, not the magic he uses.”

“ So what can we do about it?” Sirius asked, reluctantly accepting his enemy’s words. After all, the pair had been inseparable during his fifth year, so Sev was bound to know Sirius’ godson better than the man himself. This didn’t sit well with the animagus, but he grudgingly accepted the fact.

“ I suggest we do nothing,” Sev concluded.

“ Nothing! We can’t sit here and do nothing, Snape!”

“ Black I know this may be difficult for your small brain to comprehend, but I know what I am talking about. Harry has crossed a line, and he knows it. He has realised what he has done, and needs to deal with the consequences in his own time. I think it is best if we leave him to sort through his own feelings on the matter and let him return to Hogwarts in his own time.”

“ I agree with Severus,” Dumbledore intoned, “ Harry needs time and space, and I think it only fair we give it to him. I will tell the school that he has gone to train, or something of the sort, as I doubt the disappearance of Harry Potter will go unnoticed for long.”

“ Headmaster, what about me?” Glen asked.

“ I suggest you carry on as you have been. Go to your lessons, learn English as fast as you can, and hope your father comes to his senses sooner rather than later.”

“ What do I do about the language problem?”

“ I suggest Lady Ravenclaw stays with you as much as possible. I know her status as a ghost reduces her telepathic ability somewhat, but you will have to make do.”

“ Yes, Sir.”

That said, the group stood and made their way to their respective homes, the Marauders taking Glen to Harry’s secret room to further interrogate him.



The next few weeks were rather bizarre for Glenadade. He moved from class to class as if in a daze. His grades went down, and his concentration span was minimal. Hermione, Ginny and Ron were getting worried about him, but they each had their own feelings to deal with. Ron and Hermione were worried sick, but at least they had each other. Ginny, on the other hand, had lost her boyfriend, and she didn't have any idea what to do about it. She felt lost and alone; unable to help the person she loved more than anyone in the world. The weeks blurred together, with still no word from the Boy-Who-Lived.

By the time the middle of October rolled around, everyone was starting to lose hope. Harry had been missing for nearly a month, and there hadn't been any contact with him in all that time. They knew he wasn't in Domus Corvus Corax, as that had been one of the first places they had looked after they started becoming concerned by his absence. Dumbledore had decided after three weeks that Harry had had long enough, and needed to come back to school. They couldn't trace him, though. His house was empty, his vault at Gringotts was untouched, and even the Dursleys hadn't heard from him. Ginny had reluctantly contacted Heather, who claimed she hadn't heard anything from him since he had left her house.

The day of the 20th October brought memories for everyone involved. It was getting close to Hallow'een, and Harry's absence made his friends think of the things that had happened on All Hallows Eve in years past. For Ron and Hermione, it reminded them of the troll incident in their first year. For Ginny, it brought back memories of the Chamber of Secrets first being reopened. Glen thought of home, and the day he would spend with his friends and grandmother. Sev remembered the Hallow'een of his fifth year, when Harry had fought at the battle to save St Mungo's.

The day was disrupted at lunch time when a large black eagle owl flew into the Great Hall, a large rolled up piece of parchment in its grasp. Most of the students and teachers watched it as it soared over their heads and landed in front of Dumbledore. It was unusual for anyone to get post at that time of day, so naturally the owl's arrival was causing quite a stir. Albus hesitantly took the parchment from

the owl, which promptly flew off, and unrolled it. A short message was written on it in nondescript handwriting, and remained unsigned.

***Albus,***

***Diagon Alley. 1 o'clock. Half arsenal.***

Dumbledore looked over to the other end of the Head Table, where his Potions Master's seat remained empty. With a deep sigh, he looked over to Glenadade, who was watching him intently. Getting the message, the telepath opened a mental link to the headmaster.

Glenadade, I need a favour

What can I do for you, Headmaster?

I need you to tell Hermione, Ron and Ginny to come to my office as soon as lunch finishes. Can you do that?

Of course Headmaster. Am I invited?

Yes

Glen closed the connection and whispered to his friends, and Dumbledore watched as they nodded. As soon as lunch ended at 12:30, the five headed up to the office. Once there, they seated themselves, and Dumbledore cleared his throat, a grave look on his face.

"I have some bad news."

"Was that what the owl was about?" Hermione asked.

"Yes, it was. It was a letter from Severus, informing me that the Death Eaters are going to attack Diagon Alley at 1 o'clock. The trouble is, we can't fight them on our own. I have a few of the Order members I have kept in contact with to call upon, but the rest of them have been away for a long time. I can't call a full Order meeting until I have had more time to prepare. I want to ask if you would be willing to help us in the coming battle."

“ Sure,” Ron said.

“ I’m in,” Glen agreed.

“ Me too,” Ginny said, her face set.

“ What are we up against?” Hermione asked, “ I mean, how many Death Eaters will be there?”

“ Well, Severus said there would be half arsenal, which means that half of Voldemort’s followers will be there, but not the man himself. He will most likely have Lucius Malfoy lead the raid.”

“ Yes, but how many Death Eaters?”

“ About fifty.”

“ Shouldn’t be too hard,” Ron said, “ I mean, we’ve been faced with worse odds than this before.”

“ Yes, at the battle in Paris,” Ginny muttered under her breath.

“ Who are the other Order members?” Hermione asked.

“ A couple of Aurors, including Alastor Moody, and a Metamorphmagus by the name of Nymphadora Tonks.”

“ Nymphadora?” Ron asked in disbelief.

“ Ah, yes, she goes by Tonks.”

“ I can see why,” Ginny added.

“ We need to head out there,” Dumbledore continued, “ The Death Eaters will start arriving soon.”

“ How are we getting there?” Glen asked.

“ By portkey. I’ll just make one.”

They watched as the elderly headmaster took out his wand and conjured a piece of parchment, muttering various spells over it to turn

it into a portkey. When he was finished, he touched his Order mark and called everyone available. Within minutes, people started coming out of his fireplace, having travelled via Domus Corvus Corax and Harry's secret room. Once everyone was there, Dumbledore made quick introductions and explained the situation. At ten minutes to one o'clock, everyone pressed their hands to the piece of parchment and disappeared from the office.

### Chapter Fifteen – Order of the Phoenix – Take Three

The large group from Hogwarts appeared suddenly in the middle of Diagon Alley, startling many of the shoppers milling around in their general vicinity. Most soon went back to their shopping, but some stopped and stared at the interesting group of people, made up of four Hogwarts students and the Headmaster, several well known teachers, and a collection of Aurors, old and young. The motley group of people caused further stares as they started to spread out around the Alley, hiding themselves in shop doorways and small side alleys. Once they were all in strategic positions, Dumbledore waved his wand over his throat, and with a whispered *sonorus* charm his voice boomed throughout the wizarding district.

“ Everybody, I ask for your attention, please. You are all in grave danger. I ask you, please do not panic. At one o’clock, Death Eaters will be arriving to attack Diagon Alley. I ask that anyone that can apparate leaves now and those with children proceed to the nearest fireplace. If you have a portkey, please activate it and take with you as many people as possible. Those who are left, please go inside the shops and lock the doors, if possible. I have brought reinforcements, but to any witch or wizard skilled in Defence Against the Dark Arts, I ask that you help us. Please keep order, as panicking will serve to worsen the problem. We have only ten minutes, please hurry up!”

As soon as what the elderly headmaster was saying started to sink in, people began frantically apparating away. Others moved towards the Leaky Cauldron to use the floo network, pushing the children in front of them. Many people, though, stood their ground. When those who were leaving had gone, Dumbledore looked around in fear at those who hadn’t moved. He was slightly relieved, though, to see that anyone with young children had left, obviously not wanting to tempt fate.

“ Why are you all still here?” he asked in general.

“ Why should we believe you?” and old witch called out of the crowd, “ From what the *Prophet’s* been saying over the summer, you’re nothing but a cracked old fool. Anyone that goes broadcasting that You-Know-Who is back has got to be mad!”

“ I assure you , Madame, that Voldemort has indeed returned, and his forces will be arriving any minute now,” Albus bellowed. No-one moved.

“ Madness,” Bertha Borgin yelled out, a sentiment echoed by everyone else. The headmaster and the other Order members were starting to get a little agitated, knowing the battle could start any minute, and the Alley was still full of civilians. While Dumbledore tried to pacify the crowd, Ron, Ginny and Hermione started weaving spells, which were transporting people out of the Alley to Hogsmeade, one at a time. As people were disappearing from the back of the crowd, nobody but the Order members had noticed. By the time the Death Eaters started to arrive, half the people in the street had been evacuated against their will. As the black robed and masked men started appearing all over the place, those left started to scream, running around in a mad panic. Dumbledore let out a loud sigh and shook his head slightly at some people’s stubbornness and stupidity, before starting to hex anything that moved.

Ginny looked around in despair at the chaos in the shopping street. It was the run-up to Christmas, and the Alley had been busier than it usually was, and with the number of people who chose to stay, the place was packed. A cluster of Death Eaters stood near to Gringotts, but they were quickly making their way through the civilians to where the few Order members were fighting. The young redhead knew that they didn’t have enough people. If the Order was fully reformed, they would have easily beaten the Dark Wizards, but as it was they were barely holding their own. The people running and screaming didn’t help, either.

One obvious difference between this battle and the many she had been in before was the absence of Harry. Previously, the Boy-Who-Lived had been in charge throughout, giving people mental messages and helping to coordinate the Light side’s effort. Now, though, it was as if they were fighting blind. Ginny was surprised and shocked to realise how much they had all relied on her boyfriend in the past. It made her consider if the Order would have eventually beaten Voldemort if the time travellers had remained in the seventies. If Harry had been there to help them at the battles, the whole war could have been over long before 1981.

There was no use dwelling on it now, though. Harry wasn't there, and they had to make the most of it. The youngest Weasley knew that she, Hermione, Ron and Glenadade were magnificent fighters in their own right, and Dumbledore and the others were able to hold their own without trouble, but Harry had always been the glue to hold their group together. Over the last few weeks, they had all felt his loss, but this was when they finally realised how important he was, not just as their friend but as their ally. If he ever went evil, she knew for sure they wouldn't stand a chance. The wizarding world would be lost within weeks.

Pushing her whirling thoughts to one side, she moved into a convenient doorway and surveyed the situation. Bodies of shoppers littered the floor, and she could see two of the Aurors she had just met lying dead on the cobbles not far from where she was standing. There were, however, also a large number of downed Death Eaters. The Order didn't seem to be making a dent, though. There were too many of Voldemort's supporters there, and it was only a matter of time before her group was overwhelmed. She spotted a flash of red hair, and watched as her brother ran from one person to the other, healing them the best he could. She could see that he was getting tired, though. On the other side of Diagon Alley, over near Florean Fortescue's Ice Cream parlour, Glen and Hermione were being backed into a corner by a group of seven Death Eaters. The youngest Potter had been doing rather well, considering it was his first battle, but from her vantage point, Ginny could see he was starting to lose it.

Realising that their situation was becoming critical, Ginny decided it was time for her to take charge. She couldn't just stand there and watch, and just because her boyfriend had selfishly run off didn't mean they would lose the battle. Sure, it looked hopeless now, but they just needed the chance to regroup. Coming to a decision, she charged out of her sanctuary, throwing curses in every direction, some hitting their marks and others were bouncing off strong shielding charms. After several minutes, she was behind the black robed group attacking Hermione and Glen, and with the extra help the Dark wizards were soon felled. Rushing over, Ginny grabbed her two friends and pulled them into Florean's, shutting the door behind

them, and throwing up the strongest locking spell she knew. The other two stared at her in disbelief and outrage.

“Gin! What are you doing?” Hermione screeched.

“Why are we hiding?” Glen added in Anglo-Saxon.

“We’re regrouping,” Ginny said, calmly, “In case you hadn’t noticed, we’re not exactly winning. If anything, we’re barely holding our own.”

“Well, then we should be out there!” Hermione yelled, waving her arms around frantically, “Ron could be killed. He’s the last of us out there, and the other Order members aren’t looking too good.”

“Calm down, ‘Mione, I know you’re worried, I am too. But we have to be practical. We can’t beat them, not in the state we’re in now. We also have the civilians to consider. I know we’ve lost a few already, but we need to get them out of here. They’re in the way, and they’re getting caught in the crossfire.”

“So, what do you suggest?” Glen asked, reasonably.

“We haven’t got Harry here to contact the troops, so I’m afraid you’ll have to do it, Glen,” the redhead stated in a matter-of-fact tone.

“What!” he yelped, “Impossible! My father has a lot more practice with his telepathy than I do. I don’t know if I can keep up a mental connection with that many people.”

“You’ll have to try,” Ginny soothed, “I’m confident you can manage it. You are your father’s son, and a very powerful wizard.”

Glen slumped down to the floor and placed his head in his hands. After a moment, he looked up at the two girls and nodded slowly.

“I can try, it’s the best you can hope for.”

“That’s all we ask,” Hermione said, before turning to her boyfriend’s sister, “Now what, Gin?”



“ Glen, I need you to tell all of the non Death Eaters out there to gather around the entrance to Diagon Alley. Tell them to make sure there are no Death Eaters in their group, and to get as close together as possible.”

“ What are you planning?” Hermione enquired.

“ Glen, can you do it?” the redhead asked, waving off the older girl’s question.

“ I’ll try.”

“ Do it.”

Hermione tried to protest and ask more questions, but Ginny shook her head and motioned for her to be quiet. Glen would need all the concentration he could muster to pull this off, and they both knew it. Sitting down on the floor, they watched in silence as the Potter heir closed his eyes. After a few minutes, a slight frown creased his forehead, and sweat began to bead on his brow. Ginny reached out her hand and gently took his, squeezing lightly and lending him some of her strength. Several minutes later he let out a deep breath and opened his eyes, looking at the two expectant girls with a satisfied smile on his face.

“ Done.”

Without hesitation, Ginny leapt to her feet and started pacing, while the other two followed suit. Several seconds later she turned to them and gave them each an intent look.

“ Glen, can you cast a bubble shield?”

The younger student looked at her in surprise before slowly nodding his head.

“ Grandmother taught it to me over the summer. She said that no Ravenclaw would ever be caught knowing fewer spells than the other Houses. She used to tutor me over the holidays...”

“ That’s good,” Ginny cut him off, “ Hermione, I know you know how to do it. What we’re going to do when we go out there is try and combine a bubble shield to cover all of our people.”

The other two stared at her in shock.

“ B-but Gin, without Ron and Harry...”

“ We have Glen here, and Ron will be needed to heal the injured. We have to do this. If we can keep the shield up long enough for the Order members to be healed, and the innocent bystanders to be evacuated, by the time it fails the Aurors should have arrived. I’ve no doubt that someone will have informed them of this. It’s just a matter of waiting for them to get here. We also need to set up anti apparition wards. Preferably before the Aurors turn up. If we cast them while the Death Eaters think they are beating us, by the time we get backup, they’ll be in place and the Death Eaters won’t be able to escape.”

“ Ginny, I’m not sure about this. How do you propose we combine a bubble shield? It’s never been done before...”

“ We’ll just have to go on instinct.”

“ This is suicidal,” Glen muttered, earning himself a glare from the fiery tempered redhead.

“ Well if you think you can do any better Glenadade Harold Potter, then I suggest you tell me now.”

“ Erm...”

“ I thought not. Now, let’s go.”

As the three seventh years ran out of Florean Fortescue’s, they split off in three directions, turning themselves invisible as they did so. Ginny started to circle the Alley, silently casting anti apparition wards, and reinforcing them with unbreakable charms. Hermione was moving around, checking the people lying on the ground to see who was still alive. Those who were injured or unconscious she cast invisibility charms and mobilicorpus on, taking them over to the gathered Order members. Meanwhile, Glen was organising those to

be included in the bubble. The onlookers and injured were at the back, with a ring of Order members and the skilled amongst the shoppers holding off the Death Eaters. The Ravenclaw heir took up his position right in the middle of the front line, starting to chant quietly, spreading his arms out to either side of him. Many of those fighting on both sides stopped to stare at the strange sight. The bubble shield was slowly forming, and after a moment was joined by two more of slightly different colours, one either side. The confusing part, though, was that the casters were still invisible, so the shields seemed to be appearing out of nowhere. By the time the sheets of magic met each other and began to merge, everyone had stopped what they were doing and were gaping in awe at the spectacle. By the time the Death Eaters regained their senses, the dome was complete, a perfect bubble of merging colours, all swirling together where they joined. The Order members sighed in relief, and Dumbledore had regained the twinkle in his eyes. Moments later, three figures seemed to appear at the barrier, each sweating profusely as waves of magic continued to flow from their hands, sustaining the life saving shield. The elderly headmaster turned to Ginny, who happened to be nearest, and cleared his throat.

“ Miss Weasley, I don’t know how the three of you did it, but thank you. We needed the opportunity to regroup.”

“ I know, Headmaster, and I’m glad it’s appreciated, but we can’t keep this up forever. Anyone with healing experience needs to help the injured. Hermione, as far as I know, got all of those still alive off the battlefield. The rest of you need to start making portkeys. Get anyone who is injured or can’t fight out of here as quickly as possible. The Aurors will be here eventually, but I don’t know if we can hold the shield until they get here.”

“ How long do we have?”

“ At this rate, about ten minutes, so you’d better not waste it.”

“ Would it help if your brother joined you?”

“ Probably, but he’s needed for healing. That’s the main concern. If we can get some people fit to fight, it will be more useful than an

extra few minutes under the shield. The main concern is getting the civilians out of here. We've lost enough as it is."

"Quite true," Dumbledore said, before whirling around and shouting out orders to everyone. Hermione, Ginny and Glen watched over their shoulders as the remaining people were organised into groups, some disappearing every now and again as portkeys became available. In one corner, they could see Ron almost collapsing in exhaustion as he healed as many as he could, concentrating on the more seriously injured and those who were to rejoin the fight. Eventually, they were forced to look back at the shield and concentrate harder on maintaining it. The Death Eaters, it appeared, had come out of their stupor and were firing dark curses at the barrier. Each of the three could feel the extra strain put on them as the curses impacted. Although they knew the shield couldn't be broken, even by the Unforgivables, the Death Eaters could find a weakness in it and possibly crack it.

Three minutes later, the enormous bubble started to pale in colour, becoming more and more translucent. Dumbledore noticed, and hastily joined the party making portkeys to get the last of the bystanders to safety. They only had twenty or so left, but Ginny could see that the shield was failing fast. Her eyes widened in fear as the Death Eaters seemed to come to a decision, all pointing their wands at the same point. The young redhead knew that the concentrated attack would shatter the failing shield without any trouble.

Just as the spells were spoken and the horrifying beams of colour sped towards the dome, the air was filled with dozens of pops. Everyone looked behind the Death Eaters as the bubble exploded in a flash of brilliant purple light to see scores of Aurors attacking the Death Eaters. Ginny smiled to herself as they tried to apparate away, only to find that they couldn't. She had set the wards to allow people to apparate in, but not out, knowing that the Aurors would be using that particular method of transportation. Everyone sighed in relief as the Dark wizards, one by one, fell to the new forces.

The battle was over.

As soon as the Order members were debriefed by the Aurors, they wearily headed back to Domus Corvus Corax. The still injured went straight up to the medical wing, where Madame Pomfrey was waiting for them to arrive. The rest went into the ball room and sat around the familiar round table. Dumbledore appeared, hunched over, not the usual proud and imposing figure everyone was used to. Eventually, he looked up at all of the expectant faces and let out a long, tired sigh.

“ I believe it is time for me to call a full Order meeting. We need to reform the Order of the Phoenix, once and for all. We have too few members, and those I still have not been in contact with may be dead for all I know. I believe it is time to summon everyone, and see what forces we have left. From there, we can start recruiting again, just like twenty years ago...”

“ I agree,” came a voice from a shadowed corner, and a tall, imposing figure dressed all in black stepped forward, a smirk on his face, eliciting gasps from most people present. Ginny looked into emerald green eyes and gasped out one word.

“ Harry?”

“ In the flesh,” he said with a wink.

“ Where have you been, mate?” Ron asked. The smirk turned into a wicked smile, and a dangerous glint appeared in the sharp eyes.

“ Gathering reinforcements.”

## Chapter Sixteen – Gathering Reinforcements

Harry smirked widely and started to circle the round table. The assembled Order members watched him in confusion as he started on his second circuit. He had been missing for over three weeks, and hadn't even contacted them once to tell them he was alright, and now he came waltzing back in as if he had never left. He was acting rather cocky, as if he had gained a whole lot of self confidence in the time he had been away, and his friends and son were starting to worry. The fact that he was obviously alive and hadn't even helped in the battle was baffling to them as well. Eventually, the Boy-Who-Lived broke out of his predatory pattern and dropped gracefully into the empty chair next to Dumbledore, resting his elbows on the table and cradling his head in his clasped hands. He smiled sweetly at everyone before raising one dark eyebrow.

“What?” he asked innocently.

Glen was the one who recovered first. He felt a lot of anger towards his father, as well as a lingering fear. The man he had spent his whole life wanting to know had upped and abandoned him when things got a little tough, leaving Glen alone and confused. It wasn't something he could easily forgive.

“What do you mean, ‘what’? Where have you been? What have you been doing? Why did you leave me alone at Heather's house? I didn't know where I was or what to do! I couldn't even ask for help, as I couldn't speak English. How could you do that to me? To us?”

The hard look in the elder Potter's eyes immediately softened, and the smirk was replaced with a small apologetic grin. He seemed to visibly deflate right in front of their eyes, and some of Glenadade's anger ebbed.

“I'm sorry, son. I just had to get out of there. I've been doing a lot of thinking, and come to some rather disturbing conclusions about myself. I did something there that I should never have done, and what Malfoy said afterwards was completely true. I acted like the one thing I despise the most – a Death Eater. It should never have happened, but it did, and there's nothing I can do about it now, except

ensure it doesn't happen again. I'm sorry for worrying you, and for leaving you. It won't happen again."

Glen looked at his father skeptically, but saw the pain and honesty in his eyes. This was hurting the older boy, what he had done was tearing at his conscience, and would for a long time to come. The anger drained out of the ancient boy, and he nodded his head in defeat. Things were far from alright, but it would wait for now. They had more important things to discuss, like where Harry had been and what he had been doing.

"We'll discuss it later, Dad. Where have you been?"

Murmurs of agreement followed the question from the others present, who all wanted to know what was going on. It had been a hard day, and Harry showing up was complicating it more. Harry, seeing all of the expectant faces, rubbed his eyes with his fingers and massaged his temples, a sign that he was fighting with a headache. Eventually, he let out a long sigh and started to tell his tale...

## **FLASHBACK**

Harry ran. And ran. And ran. He carried on, blinded by tears, until he collapsed in an exhausted heap on the side of the road. All he could see when he closed his eyes was the image of a writhing Malfoy lying on the floor, as if the scene was burned into the inside of his eyelids. He cried for what seemed like forever, but the pain in his chest only got worse, not better. He felt dirty, as if his soul was stained somehow. He had to get out. He couldn't stay there. He had a lot of thinking to do.

As he had run from the house, he had severed the connection he had with his son. Glen was on his own now, and while Harry felt more guilt at leaving him, he was too ashamed to go back. He had seen the fear in Glen's eyes, and the realisation that he had put it there was tearing him apart. He had to let him go. Sever the ties with those he had wronged, and leave until he found peace.

Eventually, Harry started to calm down, and pulled himself shakily to his feet. Looking around, he realised he was near to a school. Stumbling forwards, he made his way behind the gym, where

he was well out of sight, before composing himself enough to apparate out.

When he reappeared, he was in a forest he had never seen before. Looking around in confusion, he quickly took stock of his situation, but he was very confused. He had meant to go to Domus Corvus Corax, and then Hogwarts, but instead he was in the middle of nowhere. *I mustn't have been concentrating properly*, he thought, *it's knocked me off course*. Figuring he couldn't leave if he didn't know where he was, he started to wander around, quickly summoning his weapons to him. His wandless summoning charms were strong enough to go a long distance, and he just hoped Hogwarts was in range. After what seemed like an eternity, his elven sword and bow with accompanying quiver of arrows came flying towards him from his left. Looking in that direction as he caught them, he tried to figure out how far away he was from the castle considering the direction the weapons came from and the time it took them to get there. The best he could figure, he was a long way away, a very long way away. Possibly in a different country. The sun told him which way was North, and he had discovered in his wanderings that he was a long way from human civilisation. The forest was definitely magical, but not as much so as the Forbidden Forest. He had recognised a few magical herbs and fungi growing on the forest floor, and had spotted a selection of smaller magical creatures jumping from tree to tree. There were also a lot of non-magical animals and plants, though, showing that he was most likely in a mostly Muggle region.

Seeing no other option, Harry attached his weapons to his body and started off in the direction he guessed Hogwarts to be. If he could just find a familiar landmark, he would be able to apparate to Domus Corvus Corax as planned. He had been walking about twenty minutes when he heard the faint snapping of a twig not too far from where he was. He was instantly alert, drawing his sword and raising his hand in preparation for sending a curse. Subconsciously, he let his vampire side take over, lengthening his fangs and sharpening his senses greatly. His enhanced hearing almost immediately picked up on a dozen or so figures lurking in the bushes and trees around him, watching his every move.



“Whoever’s there, come out!” he called, no hint of nervousness in his voice. A rustling could be heard from all directions and eleven figures emerged from several places, all with a bow in their hands and an arrow pointed right at Harry’s heart. The boy looked around, slightly concerned, and lowered his sword, sheathing it in one fluid motion. He knew he was outnumbered, and he could sense the power radiating from these creatures. They were highly magical, and he knew that if he tried to fight, he’d be shot in the heart several times over before he had chance to move. Those around him lowered their arrows slightly, but not too far. Three figures stepped out of the gloom in front of him and walked in his direction, no sign of weapons anywhere. Harry correctly surmised they were there to talk to him. He took a close look at them, trying to determine who and what they were. His eyes widened considerably when he noticed that the two females had pointed ears, and the male had long dark hair and pointed teeth. Two elves and a vampire. Harry started to back away, but stopped when he spotted the others raise their arrows once more. He was in *deep* trouble this time.

“Who are you?” he called out in the elven tongue, catching the two elves off guard. They visibly started at hearing their own language, something they would no doubt never have expected an outsider to know. The three figures stopped about three metres away from the lightly trembling boy, and one of the elves started to speak.

“We shall be asking the questions here, outsider. Who are you and what are you doing in our forest?”

The Boy-Who-Lived steeled himself before answering.

“I am Harry Potter, and I am here quite by accident, let me assure you. I was trying to apparate to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, but I must have lacked the necessary concentration. I apologise for the intrusion.”

“You are a wizard?”

“Yes,” he answered.

“Then you did not come here by accident. You lie to us!”

“ No! I’m sorry; I didn’t mean to end up here. It just sort of....happened.”

“ Impossible! No human can enter this forest without the express permission of either the elves or the vampires of our city.”

Harry was surprised by this, but quickly regained his composure. He knew he was treading on dangerous ground; he would have to be very careful if he wanted to get out of this alive.

“ I am not human,” he said confidently. The elves and vampire narrowed their eyes in disbelief.

“ Explain,” one of the elves demanded.

“ I have both elven and vampire blood, as well as human. My grandmother was a half elf, and I have elven ancestors further back in time,” he didn’t dare mention that it came from himself, “ And last year I was bitten by a vampire. I have some vampire traits, but not others, as my friend managed to heal me to some extent.”

The three were silent as they absorbed this information before the spokes-elf stepped forward to introduce herself.

“ Very well, then. I am Meilani, and this is my sister, Leilani. We are the leaders of the Teutoburg Forest elves. This is Vrykolakas, the vampire leader. Please, come with us. We have much to discuss.”

The three turned and made their way north, and Harry, seeing no alternative, followed close behind. The group moved through the trees in silence for over an hour before the foliage began to thin. Harry let out a loud gasp of surprise when they stepped into a large clearing with a beautiful city inside it. The Boy-Who-Lived gaped at the tall buildings built from nature itself in the traditional elven style, with a definite blend of another culture’s architecture evident. *Must the vampire influence*, he thought. Some districts seemed to have a dominance of one culture or the other, but the very centre was a complete blend, even having single buildings using a merging of styles. Harry was in awe, but he almost fainted when he looked up. The entire area above the clearing was covered in what appeared to be a shimmering shield. Swirls of yellow and pink could

be seen in some places, making the roof visible, but for the most part it was completely transparent. Looking around, the young man realised its purpose. All around the city, elves and vampires were going about their business, some shopping, some working, and some selling goods in an extensive market. The vampires were out in the sunlight, which was what Harry found outstanding. True vampires were killed by direct sunlight, but he quickly realised that this was what the roof was for. It protected them from the sun, somehow letting in the light, but filtering whatever it was that hurt the vampires.

Eventually, Vrykolakas cleared his throat, getting Harry's attention. The three leaders made their way towards the central building, which was of the most elaborate design in the city. The boy gathered that it was the place of government, housing whatever form of rulers they had here. He was still confused by the place, feeling that something this important would have been known to him, even if he had just heard about it from one of Hermione's lectures. Eventually, the group came to a halt in a large room with a large round table in the middle, similar to the setup for the Order council. Harry was led to a seat, where he waited for the other three to seat themselves, before the interrogation began.

" So, you claim not to be entirely human. That would explain how you got here, but not why. Are you a spy? Which faction do you work for?" Meilani demanded.

" I don't know what you mean..."

" Of course you do! Now, who do you work for, the vampires or the elves?"

" I don't understand...."

" It's a simple enough question, half breed," Leilani interjected.

" Please, it was an accident..."

" Unacceptable," Vrykolakas said, " You are part elf, part vampire. You must have been sent from one or the other, otherwise you wouldn't be here. You can't get here by accident."

“ You are a spy, and when we find out whose, you will be executed,” Leilani added.

“ We do not suffer enemies, outsider,” Meilani finished.

Harry was starting to panic, and he leapt to his feet, backing quickly away. When Leilani stood as well and started to follow him, he looked around for an exit. There were none. The elf raised her hand and was about to throw a ball of blue fire at him when Harry quickly raised an elven shield. He knew that the only way to counter elven magic was with elven magic. Leilani immediately stopped, a smirk appearing on her face.

“ We have our answer, then. The elves sent you.”

“ No! They didn’t, I swear...”

“ THEN HOW DO YOU KNOW OUR MAGIC?” Meilani roared.

Harry was reaching a full blown panic. He knew he could possibly take out one or possibly two of them, but he would never get out of the city alive if he tried to escape. As a last resort, he raised his hands and concentrated hard, forming strong mental links with all three. The two elves and the vampire rocked back with the force of it, and started to head for him in a threatening manner, not knowing what the outsider had done to them. Harry backed into the wall and forced himself to calm down. Reaching for the mental link, he started to speak directly into their minds, knowing it was the only way he could get them to listen to him.

Stop! Please! I can prove who I am

The three advancing figures stopped dead, the vampire with a confused look on his face, and the elves with identical looks of suspicion.

“ You are a telepath?” Meilani asked.

“ Yes, I am.”

“ There are very few families with that gift, especially amongst humans. Which did you get it from?”

“ The Ravenclaws”

The elves’ eyes immediately widened, as if their suspicions had been confirmed. They looked as if they still needed proof, though.

“ And your elven grandmother was called...”

“ Minh-Minh-Lama, daughter of Gaerwyn.”

The elves immediately backed down, leaving the vampire completely confused. Leilani, much to Harry’s surprise, stepped forward and offered her hand, a warm smile on her face. Harry took her hand, and her sister’s, looking very confused. He became more confused when one of the women spoke.

“ We apologise for our treatment of you, Cousin. Welcome to Teutoburg City.”

“ Cousin?!” Harry asked, incredulously.

“ We are the daughters of Lolide, sister of Gaerwyn.”

“ Lolide had children?!” Harry asked in disbelief, “ Why did she never mention you?”

“ We were banished. She is forbidden to speak of us. We keep in contact through letters.”

“ What did you get banished for?”

“ We did not support the others in their hatred of humans,” Meilani explained, “ We thought they were being unreasonable, and gathered a group of likeminded elves. We were a force to be reckoned with, and the others didn’t like it. We tried to change their minds, to stay in contact with the human world, but they would have none of it. We were banished as troublemakers. They sent us here, to the human world, saying that if we liked humans so much we should live with them. It didn’t work out as we hoped, though. By the time we arrived

here, the humans had already forgotten us. We were feared for our appearance, and several of us were almost burned as witches and heretics. We were eventually driven here, where we started to build our city, a settlement enchanted to keep humans out and our people safe. We were soon joined by a group of vampires who were banished from their covens for refusing to feed from humans. There was a huge civil war between their clans, and those who refused to kill for food were banished. They found themselves here, and we have coexisted ever since. Some of the vampires travel to the human world occasionally, sometimes allying themselves with wizards, but they always return in the end. I believe some joined the Light side about twenty years ago..."

"The Order of the Phoenix," Harry said, remembering the few vampiric members they had had.

"Yes, I believe that was what it was called. The main reason for this was a lingering resentment of the other vampires, those who ally themselves with the Dark forces, the ones who banished them."

"And you've been here for centuries and no-one even knew?" Harry asked incredulously.

"None until you. We get the occasional magical creature wandering here, but they always leave before they reach the city. You caught our attention because of your human blood. You were not supposed to be able to get here. How did that happen, anyway?"

Harry looked over to the astonished looking vampire leader briefly before strengthening the mental connection he had created to all three. With a great deal of effort, he replayed his memories of the last day to all three of them, sometimes making brief explanations of what was going on. After a quick summary of his life thus far, he severed the connection and waited for their response. Eventually, it was Vrykolakas who broke the silence.

"So, you are the infamous Boy-Who-Lived. There have been stories of you amongst my people for many years. On behalf of all of us, I welcome you to my clan. Although you were turned by one of our enemies, you are one of us at heart, and I offer my hospitality and knowledge to you."

“ Thank you,” Harry said with a grin, “ I hope we can learn a lot from each other.”

“ As do I. Will you be staying for a while?”

Harry thought it over quickly, already knowing what his answer would be. He had wanted a place to hide from the world for a while, and here he had found it. While he was here, he would be able to learn more about the vampires, and group of beings he was irreversibly connected to. He had never been able to accept the vampiric part of himself, at least not fully, but he hoped that if he got to know these people, and learned something of their culture, he could find some peace. With a grin, he nodded his head to Vrykolakas.

“ I will stay, yes.”

## **END FLASHBACK**

The Order members looked at the saviour of the wizarding world in disbelief. His story seemed so unbelievable, they weren't sure if he was telling the truth or not. Eventually, it was Hermione who broke the silence.

“ You mentioned reinforcements.”

A grin appeared on Harry's face and he raised a hand, waving to the corner of the room. Three figures melted out of the shadows, startling the people gathered around the table. Harry smirked and gestured to the three new arrivals.

“ Everyone, let me introduce Meilani, Leilani and Vrykolakas.”

## Chapter Seventeen – Returns and Yule Time Spirit

The entire Order gaped at the new arrivals. This was the last thing they had been expecting, especially right after a battle. The elves bowed respectfully to Dumbledore, who was just as stunned as everyone else, and Vrykolakas smirked widely before inclining his head slightly. Once everyone had recovered, Harry waved his hand and conjured three more seats, asking his guests to join him at the table. Taking his own seat by Dumbledore, Harry clasped his hands and rested them on the table in front of them.

“ Any questions?” he asked, looking at each of the assembled Order members one at a time. It was Hermione, as usual, who broke the silence.

“ Harry, did you even find out how you got into the forest? I mean, you said that no-one was supposed to be able to get there, and you got there by accident. It just seems awfully convenient that you ended up in a place where you could gather reinforcements.”

Harry nodded to his friend, thinking over his answer before speaking.

“ You’re right, ‘Mione, it wasn’t by accident. How much do you know about apparition?”

“ Just the basics. It’s one area I didn’t see much future in studying in depth,” she answered, a small frown marring her forehead. She was obviously regretting this oversight and was planning on heading to the library straight after the meeting. Harry took up his explanation before she could brood too long.

“ It’s alright, I never thought to research it before, either. I looked into it while I was away, though. Apparently, there are several effects that result from lack of concentration while apparating. The most obvious, and common, is splinching. Another is ending up in the wrong location. If your emotions are running particularly high, and you try to apparate without concentrating fully, as I did, you end up in completely the wrong place.”

“ That all makes sense, Harry,” Ginny said, “ But that doesn’t explain how you ended up *there*.”



“ I was getting to that. As I was saying, if your emotions are running high, you have a greater chance of ending up in the wrong location. Normally, if you go wrong, your blood naturally pulls you towards blood that is similar to your own.”

“ Like family members...” Glen said.

“ Exactly. Don’t ask me how it works, as I don’t know. I didn’t look in that much detail. All I know is that I was trying to get away, and I ended up in the Teutoburg forest, as Mei and Lei are my cousins. My blood pulled me to the nearest blood relatives it could find.”

“ That doesn’t make sense, though,” Glen countered, “ I’m a closer blood relative than they are, as are Heather and your Aunt Petunia.”

Harry sent Glen a sharp look as he mentioned Heather’s name.

“ Glen, what have you told people about Heather?” he asked, a hint of anger in his voice. Harry hadn’t wanted anyone to know his aunt was still alive, as it placed her in a rather vulnerable position. Glen, catching on, looked around at the shocked and curious faces around him. Some of the assembled Order members, those who had been in the Order during Voldemort’s first reign especially, knew who Heather was, and thought she had died twenty years previously.

“ I’m sorry, Dad,” Glen said, hanging his head, “ When you disappeared I had to tell Professor Dumbledore what had happened.”

“ I can appreciate that, son, but what about the rest of them,” Harry said, gesturing to the other occupants of the room. Glen had the good grace to look ashamed. After a minute of silence, Harry answered Glen’s question.

“ I didn’t end up where you and Heather were, because it was you two I was running from, and I didn’t end up with Petunia because even subconsciously I would never go there unless I had to. Therefore, I was pulled to Mei and Lei’s location.”

Throughout all of this, the elves and the vampire had been silent, watching their new friend interact with the people he knew the best. It was strange for them, seeing the broken boy that had arrived in their

forest taking control like that. They had seen from the start that he was a natural leader, but was often reluctant to draw attention to himself. After watching him win a battle of words with his son, they decided it was time for them to step in. Clearing his throat, Vrykolakas gained the attention of everyone in the room, most of whom were sending him nervous looks.

“ As amusing as this is, I believe we have a treaty to discuss.”

“ Indeed,” Dumbledore said, his eyes twinkling like mad, “ I apologise for keeping you waiting. We are honoured to have you join us.”

“ Yes, you should be. You must understand, we normally do not mix well with wizards. Many of your kind see us as an abomination,” the vampire continued, “ We were most surprised when young Harry came to us and showed only respect and courtesy. Having discussed the circumstances with him at length, and having realised that the darker of our kind have sided with Voldemort, we are willing to offer our assistance. While we normally stay away from the affairs of humans, in this case we believe it would give us the chance to show the wizarding world that not all of us are the murderous creatures we are perceived to be.”

“ I understand,” the wizened headmaster said, nodding respectfully to the vampire leader, “ In our Order we welcome anyone who has good intentions, no matter their race or bloodline. Any help you offer us will be commended as soon as the war is over.”

“ All I ask, is that my faction is recognised by the Ministry of Magic as a group of individuals, and not as the stereotypes set out by their administration.”

“ We will do all that is in our power to fulfill your request, Sir,” Dumbledore concluded. Vrykolakas smiled and sat back in his chair to watch the rest of the proceedings as Meilani cleared her throat, preparing to speak on behalf of the elves.

“ Professor Dumbledore, as Vrykolakas stated, we will help in any way we can. You have the full support of the Teutoburg elves. Our race is loyal to our families, and any fight of our cousin's, is ours as

well. We will fight with you, but please understand that we are not your servants, or your followers, but your allies.”

“ Of course, my Lady, there is no doubt about that. Unlike Voldemort, we do not gather followers, merely allies. We welcome you to the fight, and hope we enjoy cooperative relations in the future,” the headmaster said, bowing lightly to the she-elf, “ Now, if that is all, I believe this meeting is adjourned. Tomorrow, there will be a full Order meeting when we can discuss the outcome of the battle and start recruiting more members, as well as bringing back some of our old allies. Meeting adjourned.”

As soon as Dumbledore finished speaking, people started leaving. Vrykolakas and the elves stayed for a few minutes to say goodbye to Harry before leaving as well, promising to return the following day for the meeting. Once most of the people had left, the Hogwarts residents went into the entrance hall and flooded back to the school, arriving as always in Harry’s room. The headmaster bade them all goodnight and headed back to his office, most of the students and teachers going with him. Harry, the other time travellers, Glen, Sev, Sirius and Remus sat themselves down in front of the fireplace, Harry closing his eyes for a few moments to gather his thoughts and block out the accusing looks being sent at him from his friends.

“ Look, I know I did wrong. I don’t need a lecture,” Harry said, before anyone could start throwing accusations his way. The Boy-Who-Lived lifted his head and looked at the worried gazes of his friends and instantly felt ten times worse. The guilt of leaving them, coupled with what he did to Malfoy, had been plaguing him ever since he arrived in the Teutoburg forest. He knew it was a stupid thing to do; running away from his problems, but it had been harder still coming back and facing all of the Order’s disappointment, his friends’ disappointment, and, most of all, his son’s disappointment. As Harry’s gaze reached that of his son, he broke down in tears, sobbing loudly and letting the pain ease from his chest with the large, cleansing tears. Ginny immediately sat down in his lap, wrapping her arms around his neck and rubbing soothing circles on his back.

Eventually, Harry calmed down somewhat, and the wracking sobs eased, leaving silent tears trailing down his cheeks. Looking at his friends, who were all watching him with different emotions in their eyes, Harry offered a watery smile.

“ I think I needed that,” he said with a humourless laugh. The others smiled back at him, some of the worry in their eyes abating slightly.

“ Feel better?” Ginny asked.

“ A lot, thanks,” Harry told her, “ I’m so sorry, you guys. Especially you, Glen. I don’t know what’s been wrong with me recently. It’s like I keep slipping away from what I’m normally like and becoming a whole different person.”

“ Harry, it’s not surprising,” Remus told him, “ I mean, you’ve been through a lot over the last three years.”

“ So have Gin, Ron and ‘Mione,” the green-eyed boy pointed out.

“ Yes, but not nearly as much as you,” Remus continued, “ I’m not belittling what they’ve been through, especially two years ago when you were captured, but I believe you more than anyone have been under a lot of strain. I mean, you’ve been battling the forces of evil for seven years, and have faced some shocks, such as finding out about your heritage and being turned into a vampire. Not to mention having to leave behind a woman you loved and who was pregnant with your child. It’s enough to send anybody over the edge, and it’s a miracle you’re as sane as you are.”

“ But I’m turning evil! I’ll end up like Voldemort if I’m not careful...”

“ Harry, all you need is some help and support. You can get over this. Last year, the same thing happened. You started to go over the edge, becoming more cruel and careless, but you pulled away from it. You came back. Harry, we all have two sides to our personality. We all have the capacity for good, and for evil. What we have to do is lead our lives the best way we can, and find a good balance. You can learn to live with this, as everyone does, you just need some time,” Sev said.

“ I know, and I’ll try. Maybe a few weeks without excitement did me some good. I needed a break from everything that’s been going on here.”

“ Yes,” Ron said, “ And you came back to us. You faced your demons, and you *will* come out stronger for it.”

“ Ron’s right,” Sirius agreed, “ The fact that you can admit that what you did was wrong, and feel strongly enough about it that you can cry, shows you are still a good person. You *are* good, Harry, and you always will be.”

Harry smiled at his friends, sitting around him and supporting him, no matter what he did. *I guess this is what it’s like to have a family*, Harry thought, considering how easily the people closest to him forgave him. After a few minutes of silence, Hermione spoke up with a question that had been on everyone’s mind.

“ Are you okay, Harry?”

“ No, ‘Mione, not by a long shot,” Harry said, a small smile making its way onto his lips, “ But I will be.”

The following morning, when Harry walked into the Great Hall at breakfast, he was met with silence and open stares. Continuing uncomfortably through the crowded room, he took a seat at the Gryffindor table with Dean and Seamus, who lent him small smiles before continuing their conversation about Muggle sports. Harry picked at his food, not really feeling hungry, the stares he could feel pounding into his back doing nothing to help his appetite. Once the chatter in the Hall had reached normal levels, he was startled out of his thoughts by a cold hand resting on his shoulder. Looking up, he saw Peeves and ‘Tea floating next to him.

“ Hi, guys,” he said without enthusiasm. He felt worse when the concern shown on ‘Tea’s face doubled.

“ Harry, where have you been?” the ancient girl asked him in Anglo-Saxon, gaining the group strange looks from Dean and Seamus.

“ Away,” he muttered.

“ Away where?” the poltergeist asked, one eyebrow raised.

“ I needed some time away. Something...happened...”

“ We know, Glen told us. Harry, why did you do it?” ‘Tea asked, a sad look in her eyes.

“ ‘Tea, I’m sorry, but I really don’t want to go over this again. I spent all of last night discussing it with the others. I’m feeling drained today, both physically and emotionally.”

“ Harry, love, we just want to help...”

“ I know you do. But I don’t want people mithering me...”

“ Maybe you need people to mither you,” Peeves said, a rare flash of insight showing through his normally superficial seeming character, “ Maybe you need people to bother you, and make sure you don’t fall deeper into this pit of despair I see forming.”

“ I’m fine, Peeves really. It’s not like last year. There’s no depression. No suicidal thoughts. No pit of despair. I’m alright.”

“ Sure, you know what they say about that river in Egypt...”

“ I am not in denial!” Harry fumed, “ And it’s none of your business, anyway.”

“ Alright, calm down,” ‘Tea interjected, “ There’s no need to be so defensive.”

“ I’m not defensive!”

“ Yes, you are. Harry, you need help. Professional help, preferably.”

Harry looked at the two concerned ghosts in resignation. This was exactly what he had been over the night before with his living friends, and no matter how much he denied it, they were right. They cared, and they didn’t want anything to happen to him. Looking up to the Head Table, he saw Dumbledore watching him, the twinkle in his

eyes slightly dimmed. He would do something about it, Harry thought, but for now, he just wanted to be left alone.

That afternoon, Harry's peace and quiet was disrupted by Glen's voice in his head.

Dad, we need you to come to Professor Dumbledore's office right away

With a sigh, Harry placed a bookmark in his potions text and rested it on the table next to him.

Sure, Glen, I'll be there in a minute

With a deep breath, Harry stood and made his way over to the wall, placing his hand on it and creating a door into the headmaster's office. As it was a Saturday, and he had no essays to do as he'd been away for nearly a month and hadn't yet asked for the work to catch up, he was spending his day in his room reading over some potions books. He felt like he needed space and time to settle back in to Hogwarts life, and the hidden room had become his sanctuary away from the stares and incessant questions.

Before he turned the door handle, though, he heard a roaring of flames behind him. Turning quickly around, his hand raised ready to hex someone, he saw the fire turn green and a face appear in the flames. Lowering his hand, he walked over and knelt in front of the grate to talk to them.

"Heather! Hi, why are you calling? Sorry, that came out rude, but I thought you avoided all things magic."

"Harry, I'm sorry, but this isn't a social call. There's a Death Eater attack going on in Canterbury, and I think Draco's been hurt."

"What was he doing there?" Harry asked, suspicion and mistrust colouring his voice. Heather rolled her eyes at him.

"Well, he certainly wasn't part of it! It's not like he can do any magic, anyway."

“ True. What was he doing there, then?”

“ A friend of his’ family took him to the cinema to see a film. They were due back ages ago, but I got a frantic call from his friend telling me that there were people in black robes attacking and that Draco’s father had hurt him.”

“ That sounds like a Death Eater attack alright. I’ll call the Order; we’ll be there as soon as we can.”

Relief washed over Heather’s face, and she smiled up at her nephew.

“ Thanks, Harry. I didn’t know who else to call. The Ministry is out for obvious reasons, and I didn’t want to call Dumbledore.”

“ You made the right decision. I’ll get on it right away.”

“ Good. Harry, will you be coming for a visit soon? I know the last one was a bit of a disaster...”

Harry hung his head in shame, but nodded slightly.

“ I’ll come around on Boxing day, how does that sound?”

“ That’ll be great,” Heather said with a smile, “ I’ll see you then. If you want to bring any of your friends, or your son, I don’t mind.”

“ I’ll ask them. Bye Heather.”

“ Bye Harry.”

That said, Heather’s head disappeared from the fire, and Harry quickly made his way to the wall. As he pulled the newly created door open and walked into Dumbledore’s office, he was met with the sight of all Hogwarts members of the Order. They were sitting around with cups of tea in their hands and smiles on their faces. When they saw the look on Harry’s face, though, they became a little concerned.

“ Harry! There you are,” Dumbledore exclaimed, “ We were starting to wonder where you were. I wanted to discuss this full Order meeting we’re calling tonight...”



“ Headmaster, I’m sorry for interrupting, but there’s a Death Eater attack going on in Canterbury. As far as I know it’s been going on for a while, but I think we should get down there as soon as possible.”

As soon as the words were out of his mouth, the other occupants of the room leapt to their feet, heading through the still open door into Harry’s room. They went straight to the fireplace and flooded three at a time to Corvus Corax, from where they could apparate to Canterbury. It was a tried and tested method, and proved quicker than walking to the edge of the Hogwarts anti-apparition wards.

As soon as the small group arrived in Canterbury, they started throwing hexes left, right and centre. There weren’t many Death Eaters left by this point, but those that were there were too distracted to hear them arrive. As the black clad figures began to fall to the ground, Harry made his way down the street, looking for Malfoy. A feeling of guilt was niggling at him, as he knew he was the one that sent the boy into the Muggle world without magic, where he would be highly vulnerable. Granted, he hadn’t expected anything like this to happen, but he should have known better.

Eventually, several tension-filled minutes later, he found the crumpled body of the youngest Malfoy lying in the street, a small girl clinging to him. Her arms were wrapped tightly around his waist, and she was rocking gently backwards and forwards. She had a glazed and shocked look in her eyes, and in one hand she held Malfoy’s wand. Striding over, Harry noticed a second body on the floor, that of Lucius Malfoy. Quickly sending up sparks, and wrapping the Malfoy patriarch in magical ropes, Harry turned his attention back to the other two.

“ Hi there,” he said, addressing the girl, “ My name’s Harry, and I’m here to help you. Now, I need you to let go of the boy, and come over here.”

The girl didn’t say anything, her rocking continuing at the same rhythm. Harry noticed, though, that her grip on Draco increased. */ guess this is the friend Heather spoke of*, he thought, as he gently placed a hand on each of the people in front of him, before apparating to Heather’s home.

Harry didn't stay long at Heather's house, just long enough to hand over Draco, and the girl who was clinging to him, before apparating back to Corvus Corax. He correctly assumed that the rest of the Order would be back by now, and he found them sitting around the tables in the ball room, discussing in depth the battle they had fought at Diagon Alley. After all, with his return the day before, they hadn't had a chance to debrief. Taking his place next to Dumbledore, Harry listened to the stories from various members about their roles in the battle, and a niggling feeling of guilt found its way into the Boy-Who-Lived's heart when he heard his friends and son discussing their roles. Harry felt guilty for putting that much strain on them. Maybe if he had been there, he would have made a difference, and the battle would have been easier. As soon as these thoughts entered his head, he started mentally berating himself for being too cocky, thinking that he could make such a big difference. He thought about Voldemort's arrogance and self importance, and shied away from the idea, not wanting to end up like his arch nemesis.

Eventually, Harry dragged his thoughts back to the meeting just as Dumbledore was clearing his throat to speak. He had pretty much missed out on the discussions of the battles, opting to lose himself in his thoughts. When Dumbledore spoke, though, it was usually best to listen.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I believe we have definitive proof that Voldemort is once more threatening our freedom. We have tried to do what we can, as disassembled as we are, but it is simply not enough. Minister Fudge is refusing to believe in Voldemort's return, so it is once more up to the Order of the Phoenix to do what the Ministry has refused to do. I believe it is time for a full meeting, so we can see who is still willing to participate in our cause, and who is not. We also need to start gathering reinforcements and recruiting as many people as possible. Harry, if you would do the honours?"

Harry nodded and concentrated hard, sending the familiar tingling feeling through the Order marks, calling everyone to the meeting. Within minutes, people started apparating and flooing in to the castle, and walking in the doors, taking empty seats up. Eventually, the influx stopped, and Dumbledore stood, looking around the room, disappointment shining in his eyes. There was less

than half the original number there. Many, he knew, had been killed in the last war, but many still were not there for other reasons. Collecting himself, though, he smiled at the assembled crowd.

“ Welcome back to the Order of the Phoenix. Thank you all for coming. I know that many of you have moved on with your lives since the last war, but you have been called here today for one simple reason. Voldemort is back, no matter what the Ministry says, and he needs to be stopped. I would like to ask any of you still willing to fight to attend this meeting. Anyone who feels it is time for them to leave the Order, you may leave now. This will not be held against you, as I know many of you have new families to consider, but I would like to stress the importance of the Order in this time. We will be receiving no help from the Ministry, and the Death Eater attacks have started in earnest. Even if you choose not to remain today, all I ask is that you pass on the message, recruit as many as possible, and at least give us a chance at fighting back the darkness. Thank you.”

His piece said, the elderly headmaster took his seat, and waited for people to decide what they were going to do. Five minutes later, no-one had moved. The twinkle in Dumbledore’s eyes became slightly brighter and nodded to Harry, who realised what the headmaster wanted. Standing, he cleared his throat and gathered the attention of everyone gathered.

“ Thank you everyone for staying. To any of you who have not met me, I am Harry Potter, second in command of the Order of the Phoenix. There is only one issue I believe needs discussing at this meeting, as it is only preliminary, and that is our allies.”

Just as the words left his mouth, the doors to the ball room slammed open, and in walked Meilani, Leilani and Vrykolakas. The vampire leader was dressed all in black, with swishing robes that could rival Severus’. The two elves walked one on each side of the vampire, dressed in pure white. They made an imposing trio, and many of the Order members who had not yet gotten over the shock of Harry being second in command were gaping in awe. The new arrivals made their way to Harry, bowing their heads to him slightly in a show of

respect, an action the boy returned. With a gesture from Harry, the three took their seats at his other side, and the Boy-Who-Lived turned his attention back to the shocked Order members.

“ Now, some of you will have already met Vrykolakas, Meilani and Leilani last night, but for those of you who haven't, I am proud to present the leaders of a hidden colony of elves and vampires, who are willing to help us in our fight against Voldemort.”

There was an immediate uproar. Some people were shouting that the vampires weren't to be trusted, and would sell them out to the Dark Lord. Others were exclaiming at the presence of elves, as a large number of them had never met Gaerwyn or Lolide. The fact that a species many thought to be now extinct were offering their assistance was throwing off people's perceptions of the world. After a few minutes, Harry became irritated at some people's narrow mindedness, and shot sparks into the air, effectively silencing the room. When he was sure he had everyone's full attention, he angrily addressed the crowd.

“ Alright, that's enough. I can't believe the amount of disrespect you are showing! You are supposed to be fighting for the Light, for freedom and equality, yet here you are condemning people who you know nothing about. It's disgraceful. Now listen very carefully, I shall say this only once. Vrykolakas represents a faction of the vampires who are peace loving, and do not kill humans. As such, he and his people deserve to be respected. Despite his misgivings about humans, I was able to persuade him to help us in our fight, and I will not tolerate anyone insulting him. As for the elves, they are my kin, and you really don't want to upset a member of my family. I am perfectly willing to defend them. Those of you who have seen me in battle know not to cross me. They are bringing to our aid the elves who were banished from the elven world for their support of the human race. As such, they deserve our respect and gratitude. If we lose the support of either group, especially when our numbers are so few, we may as well surrender to Voldemort now. Do I make myself clear?”

Everyone in the room nervously nodded their heads in acceptance, disconcerted by the slight glow that was surrounding their saviour,

and the lengthening of his teeth those closest to him noticed. Harry simply radiated power, and they knew he would defend these people with his life. As the Order's second in command took his seat once more, and the glow faded, Dumbledore stood to speak.

“ On that note, I believe there is nothing left to say. I expect the Order council to convene every Saturday at 8pm. Thank you for your attention, meeting adjourned.”

As soon as Monday morning rolled around, Harry found himself sitting in lessons for the first time in over a month. It seemed strange to be back at Hogwarts, but he was quickly getting used to it. Much to his dismay, Professor Umbridge was still as cruel as ever, but seemed to be a lot more nervous than the last time he had seen her. When he asked Glen about it, his son burst out laughing, telling him that he and 'Tea had spent the last month carrying on the prank that Harry had started. Whenever they passed her in the corridor, or any time during the day they felt like torturing her, they would start sending her mental messages again. After so much time of this happening off and on, she had grown rather paranoid, and from what 'Tea had seen while spying on her in her private quarters, she was convinced she was going mad. The 'voices' were driving her insane, slowly but surely, and sometimes during lessons she would break down crying and tell everyone to leave. While Harry was a little concerned that they were being a little harsh on her, when he heard the sort of rules she had been making, taking over the school slowly and surely, he decided she needed to be gotten rid of, preferably without implicating himself or his friends. This seemed like the best solution they had.

Towards the end of his second week back, Harry called the Marauders into his room, a large smirk on his face. As soon as they saw it, they knew they were in for a treat. Once they were all seated comfortably, Harry leant forward, resting his elbows on his knees.

“ I have a plan.”

“ What sort of a plan?” Ron asked.

“ Well, I hear Umbridge has been causing trouble, and I think we should up the ante and get rid of her once and for all.”

“ What are you planning?” Peeves asked, “ You don’t want to do anything too extreme, or you’ll get expelled.”

“ Oh, nothing much, just a little prank at the Christmas feast. I hear a lot of people will be here this year, and Fudge is planning to drop by for dinner to check up on the school. He’s been getting strange reports from Umbridge. She seems to think she’s losing it...”

“ I’m not surprised, mate,” Ron said, “ You’ve got her convinced she’s hearing voices.”

“ I know. And I have the perfect plan for sending her over the edge...”

Two weeks after Harry’s return, the peace in the Great Hall was interrupted by the sudden appearance of Draco Malfoy. The only ones not surprised when the blond popped into existence right in the middle of lunch were Harry and Dumbledore, who had been expecting him. Harry was a little curious about what had changed with the boy. When he had dropped him off at Heather’s house after the attack on Canterbury, she had told him that from what she could gather he must have defied his father. There was no other reason the Malfoy patriarch would have hurt his only heir. This had made Harry wonder how a person with such deep seated prejudices could change so much in only two months. While he guessed the Slytherin’s time in the Muggle world had done him some good, he felt guilty about sending him there in the first place, especially after the attack. Draco had been defenceless. There were other ways he could have dealt with the boy, but at the time it had seemed like a good option. In retrospect, he believed he should have done things differently.

“ POTTER!” Harry heard, as he was violently dragged from his contemplations by an angry Malfoy heading straight for him. He simply sat at the Gryffindor table, watching him come towards him. Ron stood up, raising his hand slightly, but Harry pulled him back into his seat, shaking his head at him slightly. Ron frowned, but let it go, sitting back to watch the scene play out. When Draco was nearly to Harry’s position, the Gryffindor stood and made his way to the middle of the Hall, meeting the blond. They both stopped and

faced each other, Harry with resignation, and Draco filled with anger. Before the green eyed boy could do anything, he reeled back as a hard punch hit him squarely in the jaw. He took the pain, not even trying to avoid the next blow that fell. As Draco took out some of his anger on his nemesis, Harry couldn't help but feel he deserved it, especially when Draco started to speak.

“ Do you know what you've cost me, Potter? Everything, that's what! I've been disowned and disinherited. I've been forced to choose between my family and my best friend. I've defied the Dark Lord, and had my magic ripped from me. And it's all because of YOU!”

As he came to the end of his little speech, Draco landed one last punch to Harry's eye, before stepping back and looking at his bruised and bleeding rival. Harry lowered his eyes in shame, looking at the floor as Draco examined him. He was startled, though, when he heard his former enemy's tone soften.

“ However, Potter, you also forced me to learn some valuable lessons, about love, and friendship, and the value of people, both Muggle and magical alike, and for that I thank you.”

Harry's startled eyes met the sad ones of the blond Slytherin, and he looked deep into the sparkling grey orbs and found only sincerity and a hint of sadness. Harry was shocked further when Draco held out his hand, much like in their first year, and waited to see what Harry would do. After a few seconds' hesitation, the older boy clasped the hand in front of him, shaking it firmly. A small smile played on Draco's lips, breaking out into a malice-free smirk.

“ This doesn't mean we're friends, Potter, but I'm willing to call a truce.”

Harry smiled back at him, his eyes a little less haunted than they were before.

“ Deal.”

The rest of the time until Christmas passed relatively quietly, with only one Death Eater attack. The Order was slowly growing as people

were recruited in secret. One of the main aims of the Order was to stay out of the public eye. As soon as the Ministry found out that Dumbledore was gathering forces, he would send the Aurors in. Fudge believed that Harry and Dumbledore were both delusional, accusing them of making up Voldemort's return to cover up their own activities. As a consequence, he had decided to join the headmaster at the school for Christmas dinner to get a more thorough report from Umbridge, and to see first hand how Dumbledore dealt with things.

Umbridge herself had become increasingly jittery as time passed. Since Harry had returned, she now had three voices in her head instead of just two. She had started jumping at shadows and sending the students into her classroom before her to see if there was anyone hiding there. The Marauders were finding the whole situation highly amusing.

Another large change had been after the return of Draco Malfoy. While he still disliked Harry and his friends, avoiding them when he could, the truce he had made with the Boy-Who-Lived still held true. They pair no longer bothered each other, simply getting on with their own lives. The Hogwarts rumour mill was having a field day, though. The Slytherins were highly disturbed by the radical changes in their once leader's behaviour. He hexed people who used the word 'Mudblood' in his presence, he openly supported Muggles and Muggleborns, and perhaps the most disturbing, he had a stuffed lion on his bed. The Muggleborn students had discovered that it was called Simba, and immediately realised it was from the Lion King. Those in Slytherin House, though, who had no knowledge of television, thought it was a Gryffindor mascot. Draco had received so many death threats since his return that he had been moved out of his dorm and into a private room a whole half year early. The crunch had come when his dorm mates had found him sitting on his bed watching The Little Mermaid. Harry found the whole thing rather amusing, but he didn't dare mention that to his former enemy.

When Christmas finally rolled around, the morning was passed lazily in front of the fire. The time travellers, Glen and their ghost friends had all assembled in Harry's room to open their presents and tell stories of past Christmases. Glen told them about his Yule holidays with his grandmother. He was surprised by some of the traditions the



modern people had, such as the Christmas tree and presents. He found the whole experience very educational, though. When it was finally time for Christmas dinner, the group made their way to the Great Hall. When they arrived, they saw the teachers already sitting at the single long table, with Minister Fudge right between Professor Umbridge and the headmaster. As soon as he spotted Harry, Fudge sent him a poisonous glare, to which Harry simply raised an eyebrow and smirked. Fudge shuddered at the boy's cold gaze, and turned back to his conversation. The group seated themselves as far from the teachers as they could, and Harry, Glen and 'Tea started to send mental messages to Umbridge.

There she is again, talking to Fudgy-boy

Indeed. How strange, her skin seems to be turning purple

Like a plum

Or a grape

An aubergine, even

I wonder if she's green inside

Let's cut her open and find out

Yes, let's! I'll get the cleaver...

The three could barely hold in their laughter as the toad-like woman paled considerably and started to sweat. The Minister didn't seem to notice as he continued to babble on about how he needed reliable people working at Hogwarts, people who weren't losing their marbles like Dumbledore and the Potter boy. By the time dessert came around, the Marauders could barely contain their glee. Just as people were helping themselves to the Christmas pudding, Harry sent a strong mental suggestion to Umbridge, the sort of thing that would compel her to do something, but as no spell was used it was untraceable. She immediately let out a loud shriek, before singing slowly, gaining her stares from the whole table.

“ When the outside temperature rises  
And the meaning is oh so clear  
One thousand and one yellow daffodils  
Begin to dance in front of you - oh dear  
Are they trying to tell you something  
You're missing that one final screw  
You're simply not in the pink my dear  
To be honest you haven't got a clue.”

She started to sing slightly louder when she got to the first chorus.

“ I'm going slightly mad  
I'm going slightly mad  
It finally happened - happened  
It finally happened - ooh oh  
It finally happened  
I'm slightly mad  
Oh dear.”

By this point everyone was looking at her as if she really was mad. Draco, though, looked highly amused. During his tenure in the Muggle world, he had gotten a taste for Muggle music, especially Queen. This was a song he had heard before.

“ I'm one card short of a full deck  
I'm not quite the shilling  
One wave short of a shipwreck  
I'm not my usual top billing  
I'm coming down with a fever  
I'm really out to sea  
This kettle is boiling over  
I think I'm a banana tree  
Oh dear.”

“ I'm going slightly mad  
I'm going slightly mad  
It finally happened - happened  
It finally happened - uh huh  
It finally happened

Oh dear.” I’m slightly mad

“ Ooh ooh ah ah  
 Ooh ooh ah ah  
 I’m knitting with only one needle  
 Unravelling fast it’s true  
 I’m driving only three wheels these days  
 But my dear how about you.”

“ I’m going slightly mad  
 I’m going slightly mad  
 It finally happened  
 It finally happened - oh yes  
 It finally happened  
 I’m slightly mad  
 Just very slightly mad  
 And there you have it.”

As the song ended, she let out a loud shriek, and ran from the table as fast as her short tubby legs would allow. Cornelius Fudge watched her leave, a look of abject confusion on his face. Dumbledore’s eyes were twinkling madly, and he glanced over at Harry, who was equally amused. Glen and Ron were trying their hardest not to laugh, but Peeves and Draco weren’t as restrained. As soon as the doors banged shut behind her, they burst out laughing, quickly followed by most of the other students. The only one, apart from the Minister, who didn’t look in the slightest amused was Hermione, who was sending the Marauders disapproving looks. When the laughter died down a little, loud but slow clapping could be heard coming from a corner near the doors. Looking over in the right general direction, the startled Hogwarts residents watched as a black-clad figure emerged from the shadows, a highly amused look on his ageing features. It took a minute for it to sink in who this was, as the man had aged since he was last seen, before Harry let out a loud gasp.

“ Eustace?”

### Chapter Eighteen – The Return of Eustace Potter

“ Eustace?”

Eustace Potter grinned at his grandson and nodded his head, a wide grin on his face. Harry let out a squeal of delight and launched himself at the man he hadn't seen in so long. He wrapped his arms around Eustace, pulling him tightly to himself. The older man returned the embrace eagerly, glad to have his grandson in his arms. The last time he had seen Harry was when he was a baby, when he and Minh had left the human world for Falaryth to escape Voldemort. He still felt an ache in his chest when he thought of James and Lily, who refused to go with them. With one last squeeze, he pulled back to look at Harry's face.

“ You know, you look even more like your mother than I remember,” he said, a grin playing on his lips. Harry blushed crimson.

“ That's not what most people say. Everyone thinks I look like my father.”

“ Maybe you used to,” Eustace conceded, “ But now that you're older, I can see more of Lily in you than just the eyes.”

Harry gave his old friend a happy grin, and one final squeeze, before taking his hand and leading him to the table, where everyone was still seated in front of their desserts. Dumbledore had the familiar twinkle shining in his eyes, and the other time travellers had huge smiles on their faces. The rest of the table, though, was watching the pair with a mixture of shock and surprise. The students, because they had never seen Eustace before, and certainly couldn't understand why the Boy-Who-Lived would be so enthusiastic about hugging him. The staff members, and Fudge of course, knew who Eustace was, and were simply surprised to see him alive after he had been missing for so many years.

With a discreet wave of Harry's hand, a new chair appeared next to his, and Eustace sat down at the table, a bowl of Christmas pudding appearing in front of him. Harry dropped down in his seat and poured cream over his own dessert, before turning back to his grandfather.

“ Eustace, where have you been? And where's Minh?”

The older man swallowed his mouthful of pudding and turned to the emerald eyed boy, a small, sad smile on his face.

“ What do you know about what happened to us?”

“ Not a lot,” Harry said with a frown, “ Just that you went to visit my parents after I was born, and that you went into hiding shortly after. No-one heard from you again after that. We all assumed you were dead.”

“ Well, we *did* visit James and Lily, and we asked them to come with us, but they wouldn’t listen. It was a very emotional time for us, as we knew from what you had told us in the past that you were an orphan. We knew your parents would be killed, and that you would survive, but we also knew we couldn’t change anything. If I learned anything from your jaunts through time, it is that you play a very important role in many key events in history. No matter how wrong we thought it was, leaving James and Lily to die, we knew it had to happen. I’m sorry.”

Tears were slowly making their way down Eustace’s cheeks, and Harry placed an arm around him.

“ I think we should continue this in private,” he said, glaring down the table at the gawping students and pompous looking Fudge. Eustace nodded his head slightly and Harry stood up, making his way to the wall of the Great Hall. Seconds later, he pulled open a door into his room, and held it open as his friends, son and headmaster all went inside.

Once the door was closed, everyone was seated comfortably in front of the fire, and the ghosts had been summoned, Eustace continued with his story.

“ We knew we were a target, as we could be used to get to James and Lily. Minh, after all, is an Heir of Gryffindor just as much as you and your father. We went to the only place we would ever be a hundred percent safe from Voldemort.”

“ The elf world,” Harry said in sudden realisation. Eustace nodded his head.

“ The elves let me in, on the understanding that I wouldn’t endanger their world, or try and learn their ways. I picked up some of their language, and customs, but was forbidden from learning their magic. Before we left, we told James and Lily to contact us if it was safe to come back. They must have died before that happened. However, being out of touch with the human world, we didn’t know what was going on here.”

“ How did you know to come back now?” Ginny asked.

“ Simple, really. From what I understand, Harry met up with Lolide’s daughters a few weeks ago...”

“ Mei and Lei! Of course,” Harry exclaimed, “ They could have told you. When I was there, they mentioned that they still sent letters to Lolide in the elf world.”

“ Indeed. She was the one who told us that you had arrived back in your own time, and I felt it was time for me to come back. In the letter, Leilani summarised everything you had told her about the downfall of Voldemort, and his current status. I came back about a week ago, on a scouting mission. I needed to corroborate what the twins told us, and make sure it was safe for me to reveal myself. I learned all about the Boy-Who-Lived, the saviour of the wizarding world.”

Harry hung his head at that, sadness washing over him. Eustace finally knew the whole story. The pieces Harry had told him over the years finally made sense. He knew the truth about his friend and grandson. Harry wasn’t sure how he felt about it, really. He obviously knew that his old friends would find out about it some day, but his grandfather’s reaction had been the one he was dreading the most. He was family, after all. Pushing his thoughts aside, he looked Eustace in the eye and asked something that had been bothering him since the man had turned up in the Great Hall.

“ Where’s Minh? Why didn’t she come with you?”

Eustace relaxed at the question, having thought the worst. He smiled at his grandson before answering.

“ She’s still in Falaryth. I didn’t want to endanger her by bringing her here when it might be dangerous for her, so I told her I would contact her after I met up with you.”

“ As long as she’s alright.”

“ Mr. Potter, if you and your wife wish to move back to the human world, I can offer you rooms in Hogwarts,” Dumbledore said, his eyes twinkling merrily.

“ If you don’t want to stay here, you can move into Domus Corvus Corax. It might be a bit lonely, but it’s just as safe as Hogwarts, if not more so,” Harry said.

Eustace thought about it for a few minutes, before turning to the headmaster.

“ If you don’t mind, Albus, I think we’ll probably move to Corvus Corax. We’ll be away from the public, and can stay close to the Order. Thank you for the kind offer, though.”

Dumbledore nodded his head to the younger man and stood to leave.

“ Well, I’d best return to my office. No doubt Minister Fudge will be there waiting for an explanation.”

“ Professor, before you go, could my friends and I possibly go to the Borrow this afternoon to see my family?” Ginny asked.

“ Of course you can, providing none of the other students find out. After all, we wouldn’t want me being accused of favouritism now, would we?”

As soon as Dumbledore left, Eustace turned to Glen and looked at him closely, a calculating look on his face. Eventually, he looked at the rest of the assembled youngsters before looking back to Glen.

“ You’re a Potter, aren’t you?” he asked the ancient boy. Glen shifted uncomfortably in his seat, not knowing what to say to the man. He had heard about Eustace from his father and friends, having been

told all about their time travelling exploits. He had never expected to meet him, though. He nodded slowly, holding his hand out to be shaken.

“ Glenadade Harold Potter, Sir,” he said.

A large smile broke out on Eustace’s face, and he clasped his great-grandson’s hand tightly.

“ Well, well, well, Harry’s son, I believe?”

“ He is,” the Boy-Who-Lived confirmed, “ He turned up at the start of September, as a result of a spell cast on him by the Dark Queen Lucifina. He’ll be around until the end of the school year. We plan on using the amulet to send him back.”

Eustace’s brow furrowed lightly as he thought over the implications.

“ That’s a rather hit or miss method. Is that the best idea you can come up with?”

“ At the moment, it’s our only option,” Hermione explained, “ We don’t know what sent him here, so we can’t try to reverse it, and we don’t know of any time travel device that works as effectively as the Amulet of Time. After all, even time turners can’t take people back more than a few hours. We’re talking about a thousand years, here, and at the moment the amulet is the best we have.”

“ He could end up anywhere, though. I mean, you didn’t know where you would end up when *you* used it. He might not end up anywhere near his own time,” Eustace countered.

“ It’s a risk we’ll have to take, though,” Harry said, “ I know it’s not ideal, but if you have any better ideas, please share them with us.”

Eustace pondered the question for several minutes before letting out a loud sigh.

“ I guess I see your point. How do you feel about this, Glenadade?” Eustace asked the boy.



“ Please, call me Glen,” he said, “ And I haven’t really thought about it. I’m not looking forward to it, so I’m trying not to think about it until nearer the time.”

“ And it’s not like he’ll be on his own,” Harry said.

“ What do you mean?” Hermione asked in surprise.

“ Well, when we went back in time, there were four of us. Granted, Glen is older than we were at the time, but at least we had friends to rely on. We weren’t totally alone. I may not be a very good father, but I’m not leaving my own son to face Merlin knows what alone. I’m going too.”

That admission caused an uproar. Glen was protesting that Harry had been a perfectly good father, while Ginny was yelling about making big plans and not telling her about them. After all, she was his girlfriend, and should have been consulted. Hermione and Ron were both yelling about crazy Dark wizards coming up with harebrained schemes. ‘Tea was worrying about Harry’s mental state, and what another trip through time would do to him, Peeves was laughing his head off, and Eustace was watching the scene in amusement. Harry had long since switched off to their protests and was having a rather interesting mental discussion with Sev about one of the potions in his Dark Potion antidote book.

Once everyone had calmed down somewhat, realising that the subject of their arguments wasn’t even paying attention, Harry looked at each of them, a scowl firmly in place.

“ You can say what you like, I’m going with him. As Eustace pointed out, he could end up anywhere, and I’m not prepared to leave my son alone under such circumstances. Now, you are all welcome to come with me, but I won’t make you do anything you don’t want to do.”

His piece said, Harry sat back in his chair and crossed his arms over his chest, waiting for this new information to sink in. After a few minutes of silence, Ginny stood up and moved over to her boyfriend, settling herself comfortably in his lap and wrapping her arms around his neck.

“ Harry, I love you, and I’m not prepared to lose you. If you’re sure you want to go on this trip, then I’m going with you.”

Harry smiled widely and hugged the girl tightly.

“ Thank you.”

“ Hey, you’re not taking my sister off on a wild trip without me to keep an eye on the pair of you!” Ron piped up, earning him a mock glare from the younger redhead.

“ I don’t need a chaperone, Ronald Weasley! What do you think Harry’s going to do to me? Or let be done to me?”

“ Well, nothing,” Ron replied indignantly, “ I just don’t know if it’ll be safe for only three of you to go.”

“ Well, if you’re all going, then so am I,” Hermione said in resignation, “ After all, it might be fun if we do it voluntarily. After all, the last trip wasn’t so bad once we got used to it, and just think of all the things we could learn...”

The others let out a loud groan at Hermione’s idea of fun, but inside Harry was pleased. He had expected Ginny to agree to come, but not the other two. After all, they had only just been reunited with their families, and it would be cruel to ask them to leave again so soon.

“ At least this time we can prepare better,” Ginny pointed out, “ I mean, last time was such a shock, at least this time we’ll be able to pack everything we need, rather than being stranded there with only our school trunks. We’ll have to be careful about changing time this time around, but it could be fun.”

Once it was all settled, the group went back to general conversation, Eustace catching up with the four time travellers, and getting to know Glenadade.

That afternoon found Ron, Ginny, Harry, Hermione, Fred, George, Glen and Eustace toppling out of the fireplace at the Burrow. Molly Weasley was surprised to say the least, not having expected her Hogwarts children to be arriving home, even on Christmas day. She

was just about to scold them for frightening her when the eldest Potter made himself known.

“ Molly dear! How lovely it is to see you again. How have you been?”

The Weasley matriarch started when she saw him, her jaw dropping in utter shock. Once she composed herself, she took a step forward and placed her hand hesitantly on his arm, as if testing he was real.

“ Eustace? Eustace Potter?”

“ Hello, Molly. Long time no see.”

“ Eustace! It *is* you!” Molly said, before pulling him into one of her famous hugs. When she released him, she excitedly bustled around the kitchen preparing tea and biscuits. Twice she called for her husband, who appeared just as the younger members of the group were seating themselves at the table. He grinned broadly when he spotted his old friend, and shook his hand firmly.

“ Eustace, what a surprise. We all thought you were dead. What happened to you? And where is the lovely Minh?”

Over tea the older man told the rest of the Weasley family what he had told the time travellers earlier. They listened attentively, asking the odd question and getting him to clarify certain things. Later in the afternoon, the group retired to the living room, where the time travellers pulled out some special gifts they had collected over the years for the red headed family. Molly started to cry when Ginny handed her beautifully crafted necklace and pendant she had picked up in Hogsmeade a thousand years earlier. The pendant was made up of a small crystal ball, which when tapped with the tip of a wand, acted like a penseive. Ginny hadn't told any of the others about it, but had been collecting memories from their travels. It was her way of letting her mother see some of their experiences, as well as allowing her to watch her children growing up. It had been one of the things that had upset Molly the most about the whole incident; missing the last three years of her youngest children's childhoods. Now she had a way of understanding what had happened to them, as well as seeing them become adults.

Once Molly had composed herself, Ron handed his father a newly unshrunk box of Muggle items collected from all three time periods. Arthur's love of Muggles had never abated, only grown, and for him a sample of Muggle life through the ages was the perfect gift. He became slightly emotional as he pulled out an array of tenth century medical apparatus, a gas mask, and a Showaddywaddy LP, among other colourful artifacts.

The best reactions, though, came from Fred and George. When Harry and Ron handed them each a book with their names on the front, they were a little confused. However, when they opened the crisp pages and looked at the title, they almost fainted.

"Is this..."

"...what I think it is?"

"What do you think it is?" Harry asked, cheekily.

"My Latin's not that good..."

"...but it looks like a copy of..."

"...the quidditch rule book."

"That's what it is," The Boy-Who-Lived confirmed, "First editions, with your names embossed on the front, in the original Latin. Over a thousand years old, and made especially for you."

"They must be worth a fortune!" Fred exclaimed.

"They're priceless," Ron told him.

Everyone laughed at the thoroughly shocked looks on the Weasley twins' faces before the pair fell into a dead faint. The rest of the evening passed quietly, the group enjoying a decent family Christmas.

## Chapter Nineteen – Visions and a Proposition

Boxing Day found most of the Hogwarts population lazing in bed, taking advantage of the Christmas holidays to catch up on sleep missed during term time due to late night adventures or simply an excess of homework. Five people, though, had roused early in anticipation of their trip to visit Heather Evans. Harry had explained the night before that he had promised to visit his aunt on Boxing Day when he had taken Draco Malfoy back to her after the attack on Canterbury, and his three friends and son had all agreed to come with him. Harry also planned on breaking the news to her that Dumbledore and the rest of the Order knew about her, due to Glen's telling them all when he returned from her house the last time, and at the Order meeting when Harry had returned from Teutoburg City. Harry knew, deep down, that it was his fault her secrecy had been compromised by his son. After all, if he hadn't abandoned him, he never would have had to tell Dumbledore when he got back, nor would he have had reason to blow up at his father during an Order meeting. Harry felt even more guilty about leaving when he thought that it might have endangered one of his few family members.

Before they left for Heather's house, Harry wandered around the castle, gathering the courage to speak to two people he really didn't want to speak with. The first was easier, he thought, as he made his way to the stone gargoyle hiding the headmaster's office. He could have easily created a door into the office from his room, but going the old fashioned way was a good delaying tactic. Eventually, he heaved a great sigh and started guessing passwords. After ten minutes, he became frustrated and simply asked the gargoyle to move. With a wolfish grin, it leapt to one side, leaving a rather shocked Harry to climb the moving staircase. As soon as he reached the top, he heard the headmaster's deep voice calling for him to come in. With an exasperated shake of his head, the Boy-Who-Lived turned the handle and stepped into his professor's office, taking a seat in front of his desk and accepting the offered Lemon Drop.

"Now, Harry, what can I do for you?" the wizened wizard asked as he sucked on one of the sour sweets. The twinkle was present in his eyes, so he wasn't the least worried about the topic of the

conversation. Harry swore sometimes that the old man was as mind-gifted as *he* was.

“ Professor, I came to ask if my friends and I could go and visit my Aunt Heather today.”

“ And why would you need my permission, might I ask? I believe that you would go anyway if I said no, and there would be no way for me to stop you.”

“ Probably, but it *is* your school, and I thought it would only be polite if I asked first. After all, students aren’t supposed to leave the school grounds without permission.”

“ Well, Harry, I will certainly grant my permission. After all, the Christmas period is a time for family, and you of all people deserve to spend it with them. I ask only one small favour.”

“ Yes?” Harry asked, nervously. He knew the sort of favours the headmaster often asked of people, and he wasn’t sure he would be willing to agree to it. Dumbledore smiled at him reassuringly, but Harry wasn’t convinced.

“ I was simply wondering if I may accompany you for a short time. I would very much like to see Miss Evans again, and I believe it is time to let her know she can return to the wizarding world if she so wishes.”

Harry wasn’t convinced. He knew the way the headmaster manipulated people, and he wasn’t sure this was such a good idea. Best case scenario, he would simply speak to Heather and invite her to return, pulling some strings in the Ministry to get her off the proverbial hook. Worst case scenario, he would be asking her to reveal herself to Voldie and reintegrate herself into his ranks to act as a very close spy. Harry knew the latter was unlikely, but knowing the old man, he wouldn’t rule it out. The possibility made him rather wary, as Dumbledore had a lot of influence in the Ministry, despite what Fudge and the *Daily Prophet* had been saying about his mental state. It wouldn’t be beyond the headmaster to use blackmail, and Harry wasn’t prepared to let anything happen to Heather. She was his last real connection to his mother, and he wasn’t about to let her

get hurt, even if it was for what the head of the Order believed was the 'greater good'.

"What are the conditions you will place on her return to our world," Harry asked, an emotionless mask settling over his features. The twinkle in Dumbledore's eyes dimmed somewhat when he saw his student's shuttered look.

"Don't worry, Harry, nothing too drastic. After all, I've seen what happens to people who hurt your friends and family, and I know better than to cross you."

Harry wasn't totally convinced, but he nodded his head warily in acceptance. As he stood and turned to leave, he threw one last comment over his shoulder.

"My friends and I will be leaving from Domus Corvus Corax in half an hour. If you're coming, I'll see you there. I have one last person to invite."

His piece said, the emerald eyed boy strode out of the office, his robes billowing dramatically behind him.

Five minutes later found Harry staring at a bare wall in the depths of the dungeon. With a small grin, he prepared to hiss a single word in parseltongue. While he was in the seventies, and had the benefit of entry into the Slytherin common room, he had created a secret password for the Snake Den in parseltongue. He had done the same in the other times for the other common rooms, giving him access any time he needed it. As it was secondary, and no one would think to look for a parseltongue password, it was still in place and overrode the frequently changed main password. Harry had never mentioned this to anyone, as he knew that if Hermione or any of the professors ever found out, they would make him remove them. The opportunity for misuse was great, so Harry made sure only to use them when absolutely necessary. It had happened only once before, in the seventies, when Lucius Malfoy had changed the password and not told him, just to spite the one person who could always best him. He had forbidden any of the other Slytherins from telling Harry, so when the boy returned from a battle and found the door wouldn't open; he was more than a little annoyed. However, the look on Lucius' face

when he came striding into the common room made the whole thing worth it.

This time, Harry quickly turned himself invisible, not wanting to be spotted by any of the Slytherins. After all, in this time, he wasn't simply an anonymous student. He was Harry Potter, enemy of the Dark Lord, and if any of the snakelets found him in their sanctuary, it wouldn't be pretty. Once he was sure he wouldn't be seen, and had mentally scanned the room beyond the wall for people, he hissed the password and entered the Slytherin domain. As soon as he stepped into the common room, he was filled with memories; memories of sitting in front of the fire with Sev, offering to let him be a spy; standing by the door, pretending to be Voldemort and scaring the students half to death; hiding away and teaching his future Potions Master how to use wandless magic. A wave of nostalgia hit Harry hard, and he had to pause for a few minutes to collect himself before heading for the boys' dormitories. He was shocked, though, when he came to a halt in front of the door to his old room and saw the name 'Draco Malfoy' etched into the small silver panel. Raising his hand, he hesitantly knocked on the door. Several long moments later, the door was pulled open by a rather disheveled looking Draco, who looked around the hallway in confusion. Just before he closed the door again, Harry turned himself visible, making the boy jump slightly in surprise.

"Potter."

"Malfoy."

"What are *you* doing here?"

"I came to talk to you about something. May I come in?"

Draco looked at his visitor warily before pulling the door open wider and gesturing Harry towards the armchairs by the fire. Once both were seated, Draco clasped his hands on his chest and waited for Harry to finish his inspection of his room. The Boy-Who-Lived was a little surprised to see his former Muggle hating enemy's desk adorned with a TV/VCR and a row of Disney videos. He also spotted the rumoured lion cub sitting on one of Draco's pillows. Once he had completed his inspection, he turned to his quietly waiting host.



“ You know, this used to be my room in the seventies,” he said. Draco raised one eyebrow.

“ Really? I didn’t know that. You went to school with my father, I believe.”

“ Indeed I did. He hated me from the first day I arrived for undermining his authority in Slytherin.”

“ I can see how that would be a problem for him. He always liked being in control,” the former Malfoy heir conceded.

“ Strange then,” Harry countered, “ That he would spend much of his adult life grovelling before an insane half blood.”

“ He made his choices, Potter, and I made mine. Now, I don’t believe you came here for a social visit, so kindly get to the point.”

Harry nodded his head, accepting what the blond was saying. After all, Draco may have called a truce, but the pair were anything but friends.

“ My friends and I are going to visit my Aunt Heather later, and knowing from her how close the pair of you have become, I thought it only polite to ask if you wanted to come with us.”

The blond stared at his former enemy in surprise. That was the last thing he had expected from the boy in front of him. However, he did miss Heather, as well as Evelyn, who he knew from their exchanged letters would be at Heather’s house until just after New Year. His mind made up, he nodded slowly to the other boy.

“ What time are you leaving?”

“ In about fifteen minutes. We’re apparating from the headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix. If you want some time to get ready, I’ll leave a door open into my secret room so you can get there. Just use the fireplace to get there, calling out ‘Domus Corvus Corax’.”

“ Wait a minute, you’re letting me into the resistance’s headquarters? No questions asked?”

“ Well, Ginny told me I should be more trusting, so I’m prepared to give you the benefit of the doubt. However, I’ve demonstrated before what I’m willing to do if you betray that trust, so I wouldn’t recommend it.”

Draco nodded slowly, taking in everything the dark haired boy had told him. He really wanted to see Heather and Evie again, and he figured it would be worth it. Harry stood and made his way over to the wall, placing his hand there and creating a door into his room. With a muttered spell, the door would remain open until pulled closed. Harry gave Draco one last nod, before entering the room and flooing to Corvus Corax.

As soon as Draco stepped out of the fireplace, shocking most of the people present, Harry led the group to the apparition point in the portkey room. Draco was looking around the castle in awe, amazed that the Order had such an enormous building at their disposal, especially one that the Dark Lord had never been able to find. When they stopped, Harry turned to the blond and fixed him with a glare.

“ Malfoy, can you apparate?”

“ Of course I can,” the blond said smugly, “ I’ve been able to for years.”

Dumbledore sent the former aristocrat a chastising look, before waiting quietly for Harry to give the go ahead. With a nod, the Boy-Who-Lived gave all of those who had never been before a mental image of Heather’s house, before they apparated away with a series of pops.

Once they had all arrived at their destination, Harry strode up to the front door and knocked loudly, waiting for his aunt to answer. He was surprised, therefore, when a small girl, no older than ten, opened the door and gave him a curious look. He immediately realised that this was the same girl who had been clinging to Malfoy in Canterbury. This was confirmed when she let out an excited squeal, and ran into the grinning blonde’s arms. After a few minutes, Harry cleared his throat pointedly and she pulled away from Draco, her cheeks flushed as she asked them to come in. Once they were all seated in the living room, she disappeared into the kitchen, coming

back seconds later with Heather right behind her. The woman had a smile on her face, obviously anticipating seeing Harry and Draco again. Her expression turned from happy to afraid in the blink of an eye as she spotted Dumbledore sitting by the window, a gentle smile gracing his lips and his eyes twinkling madly. She immediately drew her wand and started to back up, pulling Evelyn behind her in a protective manner. The headmaster stood, walking slowly towards her, but this only seemed to distress her more. Noting her reaction, Harry decided it was time to intervene, and stood up, moving between the pair and holding his hands up.

“ Alright, stop, both of you. Professor, please sit down, you’re scaring my aunt. Heather, you sit down as well. Dumbledore won’t hurt you, I promise. I won’t let him,” he said, sending the headmaster a pointed look. The pair reluctantly took their seats, and Dumbledore decided to break the silence.

“ Heather, my dear, there is no need for alarm. As Harry said, I won’t hurt you. Now, as you have probably guessed, some selected members of the Order discovered your whereabouts when young Glenadade told us that Harry had run off. The rest found out when he chastised him upon his return. When I heard that some students would be visiting you today, I thought it was time for me to pay you a visit, and offer you the chance to return to the wizarding world.”

“ What’s the catch?” Heather asked, looking at the old man in suspicion.

“ Ah, I see you are as perceptive as your nephew. There is, indeed, a catch. Now, from what limited information I have gathered from our resident Potters, you have suffered a great deal under Voldemort, and would not easily be convinced to rejoin the Order. However, I do have an alternative for you. Call it mutual back scratching.”

“ Headmaster, I have experience with mutual back scratching, and most of the time it’s a case of ‘I’ll scratch your back, and you’ll stick a knife in mine’.”

“ Believe me, Miss Evans, Harry would never let me do that.”

“ True,” Harry agreed, “ I don’t know what he has planned, but hear him out, Aunt Heather. Remember, I won’t let anything happen to you, even if I have to memory charm the entire Order to keep you safe.”

“ Shouldn’t I be the one doing that?” Heather teased her nephew, “ After all, I was a Ministry Obliviator.”

“ Indeed,” Harry said, one eyebrow raised.

“ What do you propose, Albus?” Heather asked.

“ I am fully prepared to pull some strings at the Ministry and clear up a few things, including the fact that you are an Order of the Phoenix member, and not a Death Eater.”

“ And how do you propose to do that?”

“ Do you have the Dark Mark?”

Heather flinched, but pulled her sleeve up, showing bare, pale skin. There was no sign of the Dark Mark that had once marred her skin, and she was infinitely grateful to Harry for removing it when he rescued her. If she had had to live with it, she would have given up long ago and done something drastic. Its removal, though, gave her the motivation to put her life back together and sever all ties with her past. The arrival of Albus Dumbledore on her doorstep, though, had shaken her world up.

“ The Dark Mark is gone,” the aged man said, relief colouring his voice.

“ I removed it twenty years ago,” Harry admitted.

“ Well, that certainly makes things easier,” Dumbledore said in relief.

“ Supposing I did want to return to the wizarding world. What is your condition?” Heather asked, afraid of what the old man would say.

“ Well, you actually have the Potters to thank for this suggestion,” he said, giving Harry and Glen a pointed look, “ We seem to be in need

of a Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, and I wanted to offer you the position.”

Heather was stunned, as were the students. This was the last thing she had expected him to offer her. She looked to Evie, who was giving her a large grin and nodding her head vigorously, and Draco, who was sending her a hopeful look. When she looked to her nephew, she saw a relieved look in his eyes, and he gave her a slight nod. Her mind made up, she turned back to the headmaster.

“ I will agree on one condition.”

“ And what would that be?”

“ I want everything in a magical contract,” she said, “ I don’t want you coming to me in a week or a month, asking me to do something else for you, and using your favour as blackmail. I want it all in writing. You know magical contracts are unbreakable.”

Dumbledore considered what she was saying for several minutes before nodding his head and pulling out his wand. Heather jumped, startled, and quickly drew her own wand. Dumbledore, however, simply waved his own wand and conjured a magical contract, signed it, and handed it over for her to read. Taking it carefully, she read over every inch of it, checked it for invisible clauses, and then signed it with a sigh of resignation. Immediately, the contract rolled itself up and disappeared in a puff of smoke, leaving a nervous Heather and a beaming Dumbledore.

“ Well, now that we have that settled, I’ll be off. I have preparations for your arrival to make, don’t I? And I’ll need to decide what to tell the Ministry. I will see you in January, Professor Evans,” he said with a bow, before preparing to apparate out. Before he could leave, though, Ginny let out a loud gasp and grabbed her head, falling heavily into Harry’s lap.

## Chapter Twenty – Fudge Won't Budge

As Ginny was sucked into the sudden vision, Harry caught his girlfriend around her waist and supported her limp body. Everyone waited patiently while she rested against the older boy, an anxious silence filling the room. They always knew how important Ginny's visions were depending on how they affected her. They ranged from simple feelings of uneasiness all the way to unconsciousness. The greater the effect, the more they affected the natural order of things, and the further in the future the events they depicted were. Judging by the way this vision had hit the young redhead, Harry surmised that it was several weeks, if not months in the future, and was rather serious.

After ten minutes or so, Ginny began to stir, a slim hand rising to rest against her forehead, a slight frown marring her brow. Her boyfriend pulled her tighter in to his chest, and placed one of his hands over hers, muttering a quick elven healing spell to take away her obvious headache. Once she had been given time to recover, Dumbledore asked her the obvious question.

"What happened, Miss Weasley? What did you see?"

Ginny sat in silence for a few minutes, gathering her thoughts and going over the vision piece by piece in her mind. Eventually, she cleared her throat and looked the headmaster in the eyes.

"It was about you, Sir. At least, I think it was. It was rather vague. I saw Hogwarts; it appeared to be spring time, maybe March or April. The students were there, same as always, but when I think about it many of the Slytherins and some members of other Houses looked...I don't know...more smug than normal, I suppose."

"In what way?" Hermione asked.

"I'm not sure. It was just the impression I got, as if something had happened that they were extremely pleased about. The teacher's table looked almost the same, except *you* were there, Heather, and Professor McGonagall was sitting in *your* seat, Headmaster," she said, her frown deepening. The others started to look at each other in concern, worried by the fact that Dumbledore appeared to be

missing. After all, the only way Minerva would be sitting in the Headmaster's seat would be if she had become the new headmistress.

"Ginny, did you see anything else?" her brother asked her.

"I...yes. The scene shifted, showing Domus Corvus Corax, and an Order meeting. Again, you weren't there, Professor. Harry was sitting in your seat, talking to the Order. I think he was acting as leader."

"Was there anything else?" Heather asked.

"Not that I remember. It was strange, though. I don't think it was showing the importance of the events I was seeing, but that which I wasn't seeing. The scenes looked pretty normal except for Professor Dumbledore's absence."

Everyone sat in silence as they digested this news. The Order members were assessing what this meant, and drawing conclusions and contemplating worst case scenarios. Heather was trying to quietly explain to Evelyn what was going on, as she didn't really understand many things about the wizarding world. Draco was finding the whole situation uncomfortable. The vision didn't really affect him, as he wasn't a Light supporter or an Order member, but thoughts of how his father could have been involved in the disappearance of the headmaster unnerved him. He eventually decided not to worry about it and moved over to Heather and Evie to hear what the elder was saying. Eventually, Dumbledore began to speak.

"Well, I believe there are a few theories. If I am not present at an Order meeting, nor at the Head Table, then I have either been killed, captured, or hospitalised. While none of these options sound pleasant, I sincerely hope that we are looking at the latter. There is nothing we can do about it, as Virginia's visions are known to be accurate, however I will endeavour to prepare well in advance so that my absence will not cause too many problems."

The others nodded in agreement, and the headmaster said his goodbyes before apparating away. The rest of the visit passed

without incident, Draco taking the time to catch up with Evelyn, and Heather getting to know her nephew, great nephew and their friends better. At the end of the day, the group headed back to Hogwarts, thinking about Heather's impending arrival.

After Boxing Day, the rest of the year sped past quickly. Before he knew it, Harry was standing at Hogsmeade station on the 14th January waiting for the Hogwarts Express to arrive. A grin spread across his face when he saw the red engine appear in the distance, and he was almost bouncing with excitement as the train pulled up to the platform. As soon as he spotted Heather's long, red hair, he ran over to her and pulled her into a hug, which she enthusiastically returned.

"It's great to see you," he said as he waved his hand and levitated her luggage.

"It's great to see you, too. I'm still a bit nervous about this whole thing though," she said, a worried look on her face.

"Don't worry. I know for a fact that Dumbledore spoke to the Ministry. I was there when he left for his meeting with Fudge. Our illustrious Minister apparently threw a tantrum when he had to declare you innocent," Harry said, a cheeky grin on his face.

"How did Dumbledore prove it?" the redhead asked as the pair walked through the Hogwarts gates, "I mean, I wasn't even brought in for questioning. I just received a scroll in the post declaring me pardoned by the Ministry."

"I had to give evidence under veritaserum," Harry stated, "I had to tell them how I rescued you, as well as that I lifted the Imperius on you. They weren't convinced, which was when Dumbledore started pulling strings. Between us we managed to convince them to pardon you."

"Thank you," the new professor said, tears in her eyes as she pulled her nephew into a hug, "I owe you so much, Harry. Not just for this but for saving me twenty years ago as well."



Harry eagerly returned the embrace before gently pulling away as they continued their walk up to the school. On the way, they chatted about inconsequential things before Harry asked his aunt a valid question.

“ Aunt Heather, are you going to be able to cope with the Slytherin students?”

“ What do you mean, Harry?”

“ Well, surely you remember the rivalry from your own school days, and the prejudices many of the purebloods hold. The Slytherins especially might give you a hard time, not only for being a Muggleborn, but also for being a former Death Eater. A forced Death Eater who escaped. Those in the higher years especially who are from Voldemort supporting families may try to give you a hard time.”

Heather thought this over for a few minutes before letting out a resigned sigh.

“ You’re right. I’ll talk to Dumbledore when I see him, and ask if I can have all of the Slytherin year groups paired with the Gryffindors. I know the two Houses will fight like cats and dogs, but most Gryffindors are Light supporters, or at least neutral, and should help to keep the Slytherins under control. After all, I’m the sister of Lily Potter, and the aunt of their Housemate and saviour.”

At dinner that night, whispers immediately broke out amongst the students concerning the new teacher sitting at the head table. It soon got around the House tables that Dumbledore had found a replacement DADA teacher, now that Umbridge had left. As soon as the students came back after the holidays, the story had been all over the school about how she had run screaming from the Great Hall after serenading the headmaster and Minister for Magic. A great number of the youngsters had lamented the fact that they had missed the spectacle. Whispers were once more filling the Hall at the presence of the middle aged red haired woman, dressed in elegant lavender coloured robes. Once everyone was there, Dumbledore stood up to make an announcement.

“ Welcome back to Hogwarts, everyone. I hope you all had enjoyable Christmases. As you will be able to see, Professor Umbridge is no longer with us. As this left us without a Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, I saw fit to appoint a former Obliviator and Order of the Phoenix member to take her place. Please give a warm welcome to Professor Heather Evans!”

Most of the Hall sat in shocked silence, while the teachers, Order members, time travellers and Draco all applauded the shy woman. Heather nodded her head slightly to the students before concentrating on picking at the food that had appeared in front of her. After a few minutes, once the students had realised that this wasn't a joke, frantic whispers spread through the Great Hall. The Slytherins were sending Draco vicious glares and muttering to each other about the Dark Lord's dead concubine teaching them Defence Against the Dark Arts. The Hufflepuffs were asking each other how the woman could be alive, but generally accepted the new addition to the school and went back to discussing their holidays. The Ravenclaws began theorising on how she was alive, how she escaped, and where she had been for the last twenty years. The Gryffindor reaction was much the same as the Slytherins. They were questioning her presence, and bothering Harry with questions about her status as a Death Eater, and her being his aunt. Eventually, the Boy-Who-Lived grew weary of their constant curiosity and stood up, catching everyone's attention. With a thought, he cast a sonorous charm on himself and addressed the student body.

“ Alright, listen very carefully, I shall say this only once. Professor Evans, as you may have guessed, is my aunt. As such, she is under my protection. You will *not* insult her, hassle her in any way, or attack her. If you do, you will answer to me, and you *know* what happens to people who challenge *me*,” he said, sending a pointed look to Draco Malfoy, everyone catching his drift, “ She is not, nor has she ever been, a loyal Death Eater. She has also never been dead, so don't come up with wild ideas about people performing necromancy. Basically, leave her alone.”

His piece said, Harry strode out of the Great Hall, leaving fervent whispers behind him.

The following day saw Harry, Hermione, Glenadade, Ron and Ginny sitting in the front row of the DADA classroom. As they had had a free period the hour before, they had decided to turn up early to class and give Heather some reassurances. It was her first class, after all, and they wanted to make her feel in control. They knew some of the students were sure to give her a hard time, so they were glad to be there for her first lesson to give her some self confidence. When she finally walked through the door, ten minutes before class started, she was rather surprised to see them all sitting there.

“ What are you five doing here? Class doesn’t start for another ten minutes.”

“ We know,” Ginny said, “ We had a free period and thought we could talk before the other students arrived.”

Heather flopped down in the seat behind her desk and let her head fall into her hands. After a few deep breaths, she looked up at the students and gave them a watery smile.

“ They’re going to hate me, I know they are.”

“ Don’t say that!” Glen exclaimed, “ You may be a wonderful teacher! You need to give yourself a chance.”

“ He’s right,” Hermione agreed, “ Just make sure you’re fair to all of the Houses...”

“ Unlike Snape,” Ron muttered.

“...and be sure to act pleasantly, but firmly. Students appreciate teachers being nice to them, but it shouldn’t be to the point where discipline breaks down. If you respect your students, they will respect you,” Hermione finished, wisely. Heather nodded, taking in what the bushy haired girl said.

“ Alright, firm but friendly, I can do that.”

At that moment, the rest of the class started to file in. Fred and George quickly chose seats at the back of the room, surely planning to play a prank on the new teacher. Harry, though, took note of this

and kept alert so that he could disable anything they tried before it took effect. Most of the entering Slytherins seated themselves near the back of the room as well, keeping a good distance between themselves and the professor. Once everyone was settled, Heather took another deep breath, glanced briefly at Harry, who was sending her an encouraging smile, and began her speech.

“ Welcome, class, to Defence Against the Dark Arts. As you will all know, I am Professor Evans, and from now until your graduation we will be studying the art of duelling. It is my understanding that your previous professor merely covered magical and defensive theory, is that correct?”

Most of the Gryffindors nodded their heads, but the Slytherins simply started muttering amongst themselves. Heather gave them an annoyed look, but didn't say anything to them. Instead, she continued what she had been saying.

“ Yes, I see, well with me we will be putting all of that theory into practice. After all, in the event you run into an enemy, you need to know how to perform the spells, not simply identify them. Yes, Mr....”

“ Bulstrode. Marcus Bulstrode,” the boy drawled, lowering his hand, “ I just wondered what enemies we could possibly run into.”

Harry glanced behind himself at the boy. He looked even more pug faced than his sister. He also had a cocky smirk on his face, as if waiting for Heather to make a fool of herself. The Boy-Who-Lived turned back to his aunt and nodded his head slightly, telling her to answer honestly.

“ Well, Mr. Bulstrode, I suppose that depends on whose side you are on in the upcoming war,” she said, a look of defiance in her eyes.

“ And what war would *that* be?” he asked, his fellow Slytherins tittering at the question.

“ The war with Voldemort, or course. I'm sure you've heard of him. Tall fellow. Red eyes. You can't miss him.”

Most of the Gryffindors laughed at this, but the Slytherins looked murderous. Harry smirked to himself. Heather 1 – Slytherins 0.

The next few weeks passed like a dream. There were fewer attacks on Muggles, the wizarding world was left completely unscathed, and Voldemort still hadn't shown himself personally. Life at Hogwarts continued, and Heather settled in to her new life. At first she had had some small problems, such as howlers from members of the public, and various newspaper articles written about her in the *Prophet*, but nothing she, and Harry, couldn't handle.

The lack of Death Eater activity, though, lulled the wizarding world into a false sense of security. The Daily Prophet, Witch Weekly, and even occasionally the Quibbler were writing about Dumbledore being wrong about the Dark Lord's return. After all, no-one except Harry had actually seen his return, and the Ministry was still claiming that the threat simply came from a small group of organised former Death Eaters who 'wouldn't elude capture for long'.

By the middle of March, the situation in the wizarding world was becoming more and more confused. While the absence of Umbridge left Dumbledore once more fully in control of Hogwarts, the headmaster was gaining bad press orchestrated by the Minister for Magic. The man simply refused to believe all of the evidence supporting Voldemort's return. Dumbledore and Harry were branded as cowards and lunatics who saw things that weren't there and simply cried 'wolf' to gain attention and popularity. Unfortunately, much of the wizarding population believed it. They saw the pair as warmongers, looking for someone to blame for the outbreaks of violence. The reformed Order of the Phoenix, whose presence at the battles had been noticed, was condemned as a rebel group and ordered to disband or face prosecution. Fortunately, Domus Corvus Corax was impenetrable, meaning the meetings could continue without risk of discovery, and there was also no way to prove people were members due to the secrecy spell.

The climax of the situation came on 1st April. Ginny was talking quietly to her boyfriend at dinner when a sudden shiver ran down her back. Startled, she trailed off half way through a sentence, looking

around the Great Hall for something amiss. At Harry's questioning look, she gestured for him to open a mental connection.

What is it, Gin? he asked, concerned.

I'm not too sure. Something's off. I have a feeling something really disastrous is about to happen

Any ideas?

Not really. Be on your guard

I will do. Let me fill in the others

The rest of the group had fallen quiet, and were watching the silent exchange with interest. Harry quickly relayed the information to them, as well as to the headmaster. When he looked up at the elderly wizard, he saw understanding tinged with sadness reflected there. Harry was concerned by this, as Dumbledore rarely let his worry show. His concern was justified, though, as moments later the doors to the Great Hall were flung open, silencing all of the students instantly. There, framed by the doorway, stood Cornelius Fudge, flanked on either side by no less than five aurors. With a noise of self importance, the portly man puffed out his chest and strode forwards, heading straight for the head table. He stopped right in front of Dumbledore, pulling a scroll from his pocket and handing it to the older man. With a smirk, he spoke the damning words.

"I, Cornelius Fudge, Minister for Magic of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, hereby order Albus Dumbledore's immediate and compulsory admittance into St Mungo's ward for the mentally ill."

## Chapter Twenty One – Dumbledore is Committed

“ I, Cornelius Fudge, Minister for Magic of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, hereby order Albus Dumbledore's immediate and compulsory admittance into St Mungo's ward for the mentally ill.”

The Great Hall was utterly still, everyone shocked and disbelieving. After a few seconds, chaos erupted. The teachers leapt to their feet, shouting protests and insults at the Aurors and Fudge. Severus was sending the Minister one of his death glares. The Slytherins were mostly cheering, sending contemptuous glances at the headmaster. The Ravenclaws and Hufflepuffs were debating the issue in confusion. The Gryffindors were making by far the most noise, echoing the teachers' sentiments. After a while, Fudge decided he had had enough, and tried to unsuccessfully restore order. The Aurors were watching his efforts, mostly in amusement, but didn't offer to help. Eventually, Dumbledore sent sparks out of his wand, and the Hall fell immediately silent.

“ I believe shouting and screaming will do little to change the situation, so I ask that you please remain silent. Minister, may I ask what has prompted this ridiculous declaration?”

Fudge, if possible, puffed up even more and smirked at the elderly headmaster.

“ It has come to my attention that you have not ceased your campaign to unnecessarily frighten the population of the wizarding world. Despite my efforts and warnings, you continue to rave about the return of You-Know-Who, and are sending out witches and wizards to attack respected members of wizarding society...”

“ Respected members of wizarding society!” Harry yelled, leaping to his feet, “ You mean Death Eaters. Murderous bastards who torture Muggles for fun.”

“ Harry, sit down. You're not helping,” Ginny whispered, tugging on his sleeve.

Reluctantly, Harry took his seat and crossed his arms, sending Fudge a glare that would rival one of Sev's. The Minister smugly smiled back.

"As I was saying, before I was so *rudely* interrupted," he continued pompously, "Your Order of the Phoenix has been causing panic and chaos all over Britain, and I will stand for it no longer."

"Why am I to be taken to St Mungo's?" Dumbledore asked.

"It's the best place for you!" Fudge raged "You're insane! Talking about Death Eaters and You-Know-Who! You deserve to be locked up! Now, you can either come with us peacefully, or we will forcibly remove you."

"You can't do that!" Harry yelled, leaping once more to his feet and striding towards the Minister. The man stepped back slightly when he saw Harry's fangs and glowing aura of power. However, he quickly regained his confidence when the Aurors moved to create a barrier between the cowardly man and the enraged teenager.

"I'd watch what you say, Potter, before I take you to St Mungo's as well. You're as insane as Dumbledore, ranting about You-Know-Who, killing students, and spinning some yarn about travelling through time. If you weren't legally still a minor, you would be in a padded room in an instant."

This was not a wise thing for the man to say, and he realised it as soon as he looked into Harry's eyes. They were glowing an eerie green. With a snarl, the boy raised his arms and made a shoving motion. The Aurors surrounding the Minister for Magic went flying backwards, leaving Fudge alone in the middle of the Hall facing a very angry vampire.

"Stop right there, P-Potter," he stuttered nervously, "I am the Minister for Magic. Y-you can't do anything to me."

"Watch me."

Fudge started to frantically back up as Harry stalked forwards, but no-one moved to help him, much to his dismay. Most of the Aurors were



unconscious, and those who weren't were keeping their distance, not wanting to be blasted into a solid stone wall again any time soon. Eventually, Harry had his prey backed right up against the Head Table and was advancing fast, his wand now in his hand. Severus, seeing where this was going, moved in front of the boy and took him by the shoulders, shaking him slightly.

"Harry, snap out of it."

"He has to be stopped," the Boy-Who-Lived growled, "We can't let him get away with this."

"Harry, calm down. This is not the time nor the place. We'll sort this out, but attacking the Minister for Magic isn't the solution. It will only make things worse."

Slowly, the glow in Harry's eyes receded and he regained control of himself. Once he had calmed down, he looked to Dumbledore, who sent him a small smile, showing he was grateful to Harry for showing such support. Once the boy was suitably calm, Fudge quickly regained his confidence.

"I find it interesting, Potter, that someone who campaigns so strongly against You-Know-Who could only be calmed by a Death Eater."

Harry saw red. Before anyone could stop him, he had the Minister under a rather strong pain curse. Most people in the Great Hall, especially the Slytherins, sat in shock as they watched the Gryffindor Golden Boy use such violent magic. Some people, though, didn't remain inactive. Dumbledore, Severus and three of the Aurors all sent stunning spells at Harry, but he barely batted an eyelid. Eventually, after recovering from their shock, Ron, Ginny and Hermione leapt to their feet, each yelling 'stupefy' at the same time. Harry dropped to the floor, unconscious. Fudge lay panting for a few minutes before being helped up by one of the Aurors. Looking around the Great Hall, he took in the damage caused by one teenaged boy. Turning to Dumbledore, he gestured for the remaining Aurors to restrain him.

"Albus Dumbledore, I see you have your toy well trained. Well, you can't protect him this time. He's mentally ill."

“ You can’t do anything to him, Fudge,” the headmaster thundered,  
“ He is still legally a minor, as you said, and only a doctor can have him committed.”

“ That is indeed true, Dumbledore, but his actions today show how dangerous he can be, and I feel it is well within my rights to have him formally punished.”

A whispered conversation with an Auror later, Harry was bound tightly in magical chains and enervated. The boy tried to struggle free, but his restraints did their job well. He couldn’t even remove them with wandless magic.

“ You’ll pay for this, Fudge,” he snarled.

“ No, Mr. Potter, I believe it is *you* who will be paying for this. As Minister for Magic, I hereby sentence you to a month in Azkaban prison.”

Whispering filled the Hall, and once more the teachers and Gryffindors began to vocally protest, but to no avail. The Hogwarts residents watched helplessly as Dumbledore and Harry were forcibly removed from Hogwarts, an incredibly smug Cornelius Fudge strutting behind them.

As soon as the doors to the Great Hall banged closed, pandemonium broke out. In the confusion, Severus quickly memory charmed most of the students, making them think Harry had used a wand when he had blasted away the Aurors to prevent leaks about his wandless abilities. He also made the children of the Death Eaters unable to tell anyone about his helping the Boy-Who-Lived. After all, he didn’t want *that* little piece of information reaching Voldemort. This gave him another thought, and he headed over to a frantic McGonagall, who was trying to regain order. Pulling her to one side, he furiously whispered in her ear.

“ Minerva, I need to leave.”

“ What?! Why? Severus, I need you here to help sort this out.”

“ I know, Minerva, but if I don’t go straight to the Dark Lord and report this, there’ll be hell to pay the next time I see him.”

McGonagall considered this for a moment before nodding curtly.

“ Go, Severus, but please hurry back. This is going to cause quite a stir.”

“ I know. I’ll be as quick as I can.”

That said, he strode out of the castle and headed for the edge of the anti-apparition wards, taking the longer option to give him time to gather his thoughts.

Back in the Hall, the students were all muttering amongst themselves. The Slytherins, naturally, were gloating over the loss of the Dark side’s greatest threats. The Gryffindors were distraught, but none more so than Harry’s friends. Glen was beginning to panic, as he had once again been left alone by his father. He was also disturbed at seeing the man who sired him acting so viciously. It brought back memories of his confrontation with Draco Malfoy in Heather’s house all of those months ago. Ginny was naturally distressed that her boyfriend had been thrown in Azkaban, as were Ron and Hermione.

“ He’ll never cope,” Ron said, morosely, “ You know how badly the Dementors affect him.”

“ His mind’s stronger now,” Ginny said, “ Since he gained his telepathy, he’s become a natural occlumens. He should be able to protect his mind better than when he was younger.”

“ Yes, but there’s only so much he’ll be able to take,” Glen added, “ I know from what my grandmother told me that Dementors can be fought off with the mind, but eventually they wear down even the strongest of mental defences. Eventually, he’ll break.”

“ He also has his animagus form,” Hermione reminded them, “ He can do what Sirius did and change as much as possible. After all, the minds of animals are simpler and therefore not affected as badly as a human’s mind.”

“ One way or another, this isn’t good,” Ron said with a sigh.

At the edge of the school grounds, Dumbledore and Harry were split up, one group of Aurors accompanying each to their new locations. The headmaster found himself standing in the reception area of St Mungo’s hospital. One of the Aurors led him forwards towards the secretary’s desk, where he rang a bell and waited for someone to turn up. Moments later, a flustered looking young witch appeared, giving them a large smile.

“ Welcome to St Mungo’s, how may I help you?”

“ We are here to deliver Albus Dumbledore into the care of the mental illness ward.”

The witch’s smile faded and she looked in concern at the elderly man.

“ Professor Dumbledore? Are you alright, Sir?” she asked, obviously remembering him fondly from her school days. She received a sad smile and slight nod in response.

“ May I ask why Professor Dumbledore is to be admitted to the mental illness ward? He seems perfectly sane to me.”

The lead Auror was becoming impatient, and he sent her a sour look.

“ Minister Fudge’s orders. He believes this man to be insane, and you would do well not to question his decisions. Now, if you’ll kindly contact the head healer in the mental illness ward, I believe he is expecting us.”

The woman nodded her head shakily, obviously disturbed by the situation. After sending for the head healer, she watched as some of the Aurors led Dumbledore to a chair and made him sit, flanking him to stop him from trying to escape. Several minutes later, the requested wizard appeared and began a heated discussion with the lead Auror. Ten minutes later, Dumbledore was being led upstairs.

Half an hour after the argument with Fudge in the Great Hall, Albus Dumbledore, Order of Merlin, First Class and renowned Headmaster

of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, found himself strapped to a bed in a padded cell.

Harry wasn't faring much better. After appearing at the shore of a rough looking sea, he was dragged into a tiny row boat and chained to the stern. The rickety boat, manned by a Dementor and two prison guards, pushed off from the shore and made its way into the mist. The Dementor didn't have an immediate effect on Harry, as he had mentally prepared for this, but the dankness of the setting, the rain lashing down on him, and the roughness of the sea made him feel increasingly morose. But then, he thought, he'd brought it on himself. Let his temper get the better of him, and had taken it out on someone else. Granted, Fudge deserved it, but that was no excuse. Harry's depression began to quickly fill the places the anger had left in him, and the atrocious journey seemed never to end. How had he ended up in Azkaban? He didn't want to think about it now, but knew the situation would become all too real once they reached their destination. He contemplated which was worse, the wizarding prison or a padded cell. They each had their pros and cons. The padded cell didn't have Dementors, but then such an environment would drive a sane person mad eventually. He knew why Fudge couldn't send him to St Mungo's. After all, while he was physically and mentally eighteen years old, his birth certificate still showed him to be fifteen. Legally, he was still a minor. It was proving to be a curse, he realised now.

After an hour long boat ride, the mist began to part and Harry caught his first glance of Azkaban prison. A jagged mound of rock protruded from the roiling sea, an enormous stone structure adorning it, like a twisted Alcatraz. What little hope Harry still had left in his heart quickly drained away at this first glimpse of his home for the next month.

As soon as Harry was dragged off the boat and onto the island, he felt the cold chill of Dementors surrounding him from all sides. With a bitter snort, he imagined how he probably faced some of these very Dementors at the Battle of Paris before his last incarceration. The scene around him seemed to blur as he strengthened his mental shields as best he could. When he was thrown into a dank and damp cell, he sank into the corner and rested his head on his knees,

wrapping his newly freed arms around his legs and feeling the anti-magic field going up around him. All the time, as he felt his magic bound inside him and the option of transforming into his animagus form slipping away, he held one thought in his head.

How did Sirius bare it for twelve years?

Severus appeared outside the Riddle house with a small pop. Looking up at the large building, he felt a shiver travelling down his spine. No matter how many times he faced Voldemort, he still felt nothing but an intense fear. After all, the evil man had had so much power over the Potions Master for so many years, it was sure to happen. Pulling his cloak further around himself, Severus quickly made his way to the door and knocked loudly. The door was soon pulled open by a terrified house elf, which opened it wide and ushered Severus inside, leading him to the Dark Lord.

As soon as Severus laid eyes on his 'master', he knelt on the floor and kissed the hem of the madman's robe.

"Master, I bring news from Hogwarts."

"I see. What has been happening in the enemy's den, my loyal spy?"

"Dumbledore and Potter are gone, my Lord."

"Gone?" the red-eyed man said, glee in his voice.

"Yes, Master. Fudge ordered Dumbledore be committed. He is in St Mungo's. Potter protested vehemently, and even attacked the Minister with a pain curse. He has been sent to Azkaban for a month."

Voldemort remained silent as he mulled over this information. The idea of Potter attacking the Minister set alarm bells ringing, especially when he coupled that with his stint in prison.

"So, the 'saviour' has been sent to Azkaban. How...fortunate. Severus, my servant, you have done well."

“ Thank you, Master,” Severus said, cringing inwardly. He knew the other man was up to something. His suspicions were soon confirmed.

“ Severus, tell me, from what you have seen of Potter since the start of the term, does he seem any more...Dark, than usual?”

Severus had to think frantically. He didn't know how much the Dark Lord knew, and didn't want to tempt fate by lying, but on the other hand, he didn't want to give anything away that could harm Harry. Deciding that half truths would have to do, he formulated an answer.

“ My Lord, I believe he may be delving slightly into the Dark Arts. As you may have heard, he made a spectacle of Draco Malfoy in September, using an array of Dark spells while duelling him.”

“ Indeed? I heard from Lucius that his son had defected. Have you any other evidence?”

Severus hesitated a moment too long, and paid the price.

“ Do not hold back on me, Severus! Crucio!”

Severus collapsed to the floor, pretending to writhe in agony. It was times like this he was glad of his immunity necklace. Once the curse was lifted, he made a show of sitting up before answering.

“ My Lord, I apologise for hesitating, I was simply gathering my thoughts. Master, he has shown signs over the last few months that he is using at least a little Dark magic. His temper has also been causing him some problems.”

At the huge grin that broke out on Voldemort's face, Severus' heart sank. He hated giving away so much information on Harry, but he had little choice. At least he wasn't telling the unbalanced man that Harry was a self proclaimed Dark wizard. The Potions Master became even more nervous when Voldemort began rubbing his hands together in glee.

“ Severus, do you see what this could mean?”

“ I believe so, Master...”

“ This could be the ultimate revenge! If the rumours I have been hearing are true, and the boy has indeed travelled through time, then my suspicions are likely true. Harry Potter is Harry Evans. The boy I have wanted vengeance on for fifty years. But now the time has come to destroy the light of the wizarding world. I shall wait until he is released from Azkaban before giving him a choice. To join me, or die.”

“ Master?” Severus spoke, hesitantly.

“ What is it, Severus?” he answered, suspiciously.

“ If I may ask, my Lord, how do you propose to kill him?”

“ Severus, Severus, how often do I ask my Death Eaters not to question my plans? However, you have brought me good news, so I shall indulge you. You see, by the time Potter is released from Azkaban, the Dementors will have done their job of removing his happy memories. If he doesn't willingly join our side, he will be weak. With Dumbledore locked up, it is the perfect opportunity to attack Hogwarts and begin my takeover of the wizarding world. Of course, you may wonder why I don't attack immediately. Well, Severus, you see, that would be too easy. I want Potter, and in his weakened state he will be no match for Lord Voldemort. In just over a month's time, Hogwarts will fall.”



## Chapter Twenty Two – The Loss is Felt

When Severus made it back to Hogwarts, the school was still in a state of chaos. Normally, the loss of the headmaster wouldn't cause such a stir. After all, Dumbledore had been forced to leave during the Chamber of Secrets incident, and the school had managed without him. However, this time, they didn't have as much warning. Ginny's vision had told them that the headmaster would be leaving, but wasn't specific enough for them to make proper arrangements. Now the professor had been taken suddenly, leaving Minerva trying her best to sort out the school. She had been prepared to take over the school for years, and thought she could manage it without trouble. In reality, though, the situation had put her in a very difficult position. The students were in a state of panic, especially the Gryffindors. Not only had they lost the headmaster, but also the Boy-Who-Lived. Harry's absence was causing as much of a stir as Dumbledore's. The Gryffindors were asking her questions left, right and centre about his arrest and his reaction to Dumbledore's situation, and Harry's closest friends and son were protesting strongly and calling for an Order meeting.

Severus headed straight to the headmaster's office as soon as he entered the school grounds. The scene he found there was, for him, rather amusing. Minerva was stood behind Dumbledore's desk, trying to calm down an enraged animagus and pacing werewolf. The remaining time travellers, plus Peeves and Gallatea, were huddled in the corner, whispering frantically. The rest of the Hogwarts staff were yelling questions at Minerva and causing her to become even more stressed. Severus decided not to disturb them and quietly slipped into an armchair strategically positioned out of everyone's line of sight, waiting for someone to notice him. He watched in amusement as Sirius ranted at Remus, who was still pacing and ignoring his friend. Minerva was becoming more and more frazzled as the minutes passed, and eventually flopped down into Albus' chair and rested her head in her hands, a look of defeat on her face. Taking pity on her, Severus cleared his throat loudly, making everyone in the room jump in surprise. They all swiveled around quickly and gaped at him, all wondering when he had arrived. Sev simply smirked back at them.

“ I see things aren’t going as planned,” he drawled in amusement, causing most of the staff and the Marauders to glare at him.

“ Whatever gave you *that* impression, Snape?” Sirius sneered. Severus simply scowled back.

“ It seems to me that everyone is panicking, which won’t get anyone anywhere,” he said.

“ At least we didn’t go running off at the first sign of trouble,” the animagus snarled, “ We came to help, unlike some people.”

“ I suggest, Black, that you get all of your facts straight before throwing around accusations. As it happens, I have gained several important pieces of information regarding the Dark Lord’s plans to attack Hogwarts, while the rest of you have been sitting around here and arguing pointlessly. Which do you suppose will be more useful in the grand scheme of things?” he replied, one delicate eyebrow raised in mockery. Sirius growled under his breath and crossed his arms over his chest, looking displeased. Minerva cleared her throat, a stern look on her face, and silenced the two rivals.

“ That’s enough, you two. You’re worse than the first years! Severus, please tell us what you found out.”

Severus smirked and glanced at Sirius and Remus.

“ Well, the Dark Lord was most pleased to hear what has happened to Albus and Harry. He has decided to attack the school in a little over a month’s time.”

“ Why then?” Hermione asked, “ Why not while Harry and Professor Dumbledore are both away?”

“ Because he wants to kill Harry,” Severus said, “ He has heard the rumours that you spent several years travelling through time, and has come to the obvious conclusion that Harry Potter and Harry Evans are the same person. He has several scores to settle with both identities. I’m not sure if he has realised that Harry Anguifer was one of Harry’s incarnations, but if he hasn’t, he soon will. When that time comes, I will most likely be summoned and questioned, as most of

the Death Eaters know we were friends during my fifth year. Even discounting that year, Harry has done a lot to annoy the Dark Lord, and he wants to attack when he comes out of Azkaban. He's banking on Harry being weak from his month with the Dementors, and expects him to be an easy target. If he attacks in the next month, he will have Hogwarts, but not his nemesis. It's all about revenge now, not taking over the world."

"If that's true, then Harry's going to be vulnerable," Ginny whispered, alarmed, "I mean, we all know how much he hates Dementors, and after a month he'll be in no state to fight Voldemort. From our estimations, his mental shields will start to fail after about two and a half weeks. After that, he'll be facing their full effects."

"Is there no way to get him out early? Or get Albus released?" Professor Sinistra asked.

"We can't free Mr. Potter," Professor Flitwick piped up, "He attacked the Minister for Magic, which is punishable by an Azkaban sentence. We were lucky Fudge only sent him there for a month; he was well within his rights to make it longer. As for Albus, we can contest the action against him, but it will take several weeks for them to carry out psychological evaluations and take our case through the courts. As much as we may dislike it, Fudge is the Minister for Magic, and has a lot of power that we don't have at our disposal. By the time we manage to get him released, You-Know-Who will have attacked and it will all be over."

"We could break them out," Ron suggested.

"Are you crazy?!" Hermione squealed, "You can't break someone out of Azkaban and St. Mungo's without serious repercussions. I mean, how many people would be able to pull that off? We would be prime suspects, and all it takes is three drops of veritaserum and we'll all be in prison for a lot longer than a month."

The room fell silent as everyone considered what had been said. There was nothing they could do to help Harry and Dumbledore, and they all knew it. For the time being, all they could do was wait.

The next morning found the school a little more organised, but still far from sorted out. When the time travellers arrived at breakfast, they slumped into their seats and waited for the rest of the student body to arrive. A few decisions had been made the night before, and the teachers had stayed up for several hours after the students left trying to sort the school out. Minerva was due to make a speech at breakfast, as soon as the students all arrived.

Ten minutes later, the Great Hall was full, and Minerva cleared her throat loudly and waited for silence. Once she had everyone's attention, she stood up to address the crowd.

"Everyone, as you know we have lost two of our number, Mr. Potter and Professor Dumbledore. They will not be with us for some time, so in the meantime, I will be taking over all of Professor Dumbledore's headmaster duties until his eventual return. As for Mr. Potter, when he returns in a month's time I hope you will all help him in his recovery. Azkaban is a hostile environment, and I'm sure he will be thankful for your full support. For the time being, while the headmaster is away, we have a new Transfiguration teacher and Head of Gryffindor House taking over my duties while I am acting as headmistress. Please welcome Professor Black!"

The majority of the students gawped at Sirius as he stood up and took a bow, a mischievous smile on his face. The time travellers immediately started cheering their friends' godfather, while further down the table, Severus glared heatedly at the animagus. When Sirius took his seat, Minerva let out a long suffering sigh, knowing she was going to have a lot on her plate with another Marauder as a permanent resident of Hogwarts.

Towards the end of breakfast the owl post arrived, dropping issues of the Daily Prophet in front of many of the students and teachers. As expected, a picture of Dumbledore and Harry was plastered on the front page, the whole story, including the gory details, spelled out in indelible black ink. Hermione threw the paper on the table in disgust and stormed out of the Great Hall, her friends hot on her heels.

Over the next couple of weeks the number of Death Eater attacks increased dramatically without the head of the Order and his second

in command there to keep them at bay. Fudge, as usual ignored them completely. Voldemort was becoming a lot bolder, and without the Order getting in his way, he was causing a lot of destruction.

The Order of the Phoenix members at Hogwarts had frequent meetings trying to decide what to do, but they didn't have much opportunity to prevent the attacks. Severus was bringing them what intelligence he could, but without a clear leader, and without the full strength of their allies, they couldn't do much more than appear at the end of the attacks and help the wounded and bury the dead.

The main problem they faced, apart from not having any form of clear leadership, was their inability to summon members. It was a flaw in the Order system they had never considered. If they could summon the Order Council, they would be able to make decisions democratically. However, Dumbledore and Harry controlled the Order marks, and so only they could summon the members. As it was impossible to get hold of all of the members by floo, owl or apparition in time to counter attacks, they were helpless. Especially as they had no other way of getting hold of their non-human allies.

As the days dragged by, it became increasingly obvious just how much Dumbledore and Harry contributed to the war effort, and how much difference they made to people's everyday lives. Glen was finding it especially hard, much like the last time he was separated from his father. This time, though, he could still feel a feeble mental link to Harry. It kept him alive, knowing his father was still sane.

In St Mungo's, Dumbledore lay on his back in his padded cell, staring at the ceiling. Despite his utterly calm appearance, his thoughts were whirling in his head. He knew what the school would be going through with the loss of both of the Order leaders. He knew Minerva would be panicking. He knew that the whole situation could only get worse, and all because Fudge was paranoid. Voldemort wouldn't rest because his biggest rivals were out of the picture. No, he would double his efforts. And it was all Fudge's fault. The attacks, the loss of innocent life, all of it. While Dumbledore's blood boiled inside at the thoughts, his exterior was the picture of calm as he quietly hummed to himself.

Life in Azkaban wasn't nearly so comfortable. For Harry, the constant presence of the Dementors was wearing on him fast. True, he had strong mental shields, but they could only suffer a constant barrage for so long before wearing down. After two weeks in the hellhole, Harry was feeling more and more miserable. Being locked in a room with only your thoughts can easily drive a person mad, even without the Dementors sucking out your best thoughts and memories. He spent his time thinking about his friends, his family, the people he had met and the people he had lost. He wondered what was happening on the outside, how many attacks there were and how the Order was coping. He thought of his fellow time travellers, including his son, and wondered if they were just fine without him. He wondered what Sirius and Remus, his last connection to his parents, thought of his incarceration. Sirius would be so ashamed, as would Severus. Most of all, though, he thought about everything he had done wrong in his life. He knew attacking the Minister for Magic was a bad idea, but his emotions had simply run away with themselves. He felt ashamed of his actions over the last year and a half, knowing that on several occasions he had begun to slip towards true Darkness. The disturbing thing for Harry, though, was that he knew that it wasn't the magic he used. It was him, pure and simple. This thought brought his depression to the fore, and he spent his days wallowing in self pity, falling deeper and deeper into the abyss.

Two days into his third week, Harry's nightmare was interrupted by Cornelius Fudge. The Boy-Who-Lived was woken from his slumber by a niggling feeling in the back of his mind. Looking around, it took him a moment to identify what was bothering him. He had set several mental alarms connected to certain people so that his mind would sense them when they were within a certain distance of him. He had had nothing better to do while locked in a cell, so had been exploring his mental gift as much as possible. From what he could tell, the Minister was at the far end of the long corridor, heading in his direction. While exploring his surroundings, Harry had discovered that, much like his imprisonment in Grindelwald's headquarters, all forms of human magic, except his mind gift, seemed to be blocked by the anti-magic field. However, he gradually realised that some limited elven magic could be used, and his connection to Voldemort through the Dark Mark was still open to him. As he thought of this, a huge

grin spread across his face. He would give Fudge the surprise of a lifetime, and hopefully scare him half to death in the process.

### Chapter Twenty Three – Plans of Attack

As Fudge and his escort made their way purposefully towards Harry's cell, the boy in question frantically formulated a cunning plan to humiliate the Minister for Magic. His hate of Fudge rivalled his hate of the Dark Lord, which didn't say much for the cowardly man's chances when faced with a plotting Boy-Who-Lived. Just as the 'visitors' stopped outside the cell, Harry closed his eyes and concentrated on opening his link with Voldemort. He knew he wouldn't be able to do much with the anti-magic field in place, but it would be enough to keep him amused for the next couple of weeks. His time in Azkaban so far had been tedious at best, as his mental shields had successfully kept the Dementors at bay, but he knew he couldn't hold out indefinitely, meaning he would have to face their effects sooner rather than later.

As the many bolts and locks were opened in the solid iron door, Harry grabbed hold of the thin thread of magic connecting him to the evil monster and coaxed it further open. He could feel an ominous presence on the other end, and fiercely tightened his control on his mental shields to keep the Dark Lord out of his mind. At the same time, he sifted through Voldemort's superficial thoughts, which mostly involved plans for maiming and torturing the scarred boy, as well as the odd design on pillaging his way through Hogwarts. Harry turned away from the thoughts in disgust, looking deeper to his nemesis' personality traits and physical attributes. As soon as he found them, he selected what he needed and quickly retreated back to his own mind. By the time he was finished, his cell door had been pulled open and Fudge was smirking down at him. He obviously expected to see Harry raving like a lunatic after two weeks with the Dementors, and his smug expression was betrayed by the look in his eyes. Emerald green met mud brown, and Harry could see surprise and confusion, and not a little disappointment, in the Minister's eyes. Harry smirked back, an especially cold expression on his face.

" Good Morning, Cornelius," he drawled. Fudge puffed up in an indignant manner and sent him a poisonous look.

" I don't believe I gave you permission to use my first name, Potter," he huffed. Harry grinned back maniacally.



“ Oh, no, Cornelius, I don’t believe you did. But then, titles are meant for people you respect, don’t you agree?”

“ Now see here, Potter...”

“ Mr. Potter, if you please. The Minister for Magic should be polite at all times, it’s good politics, after all. I, however, am a lowly convict, and am not bound by the same constraints. Now, I ask that you state your business here. You are, after all, disturbing my peace and quiet.”

Fudge gave Harry an incredulous look, clearly showing his disbelief at the boy.

“ Potter, I am here to inform you that several people have appealed against your sentence. However, as Minister for Magic, and being the person wronged by your actions, I vetoed their complaints and ensured your presence here for the next two weeks.”

Harry raised one eyebrow at the man in a show of obvious sarcasm. A small smile appeared on his lips and he gracefully stood up and began circling the man standing in the middle of the cell. The guard by the door shifted a little uncomfortably, ready to intervene if it became necessary to do so. As Harry was circling the now slightly disconcerted politician, his eyes gradually changed colour, until he was gazing into Fudge’s frightened eyes with blazing blood red orbs.

“ Do you honestly expect me to believe, Cornelius, that you came all the way down to Azkaban prison in person to inform me of such trivial news? Tut tut, Cornelius, I thought you had better things to do with your time and the taxpayers’ money. Obviously I was wrong.”

“ I don’t know what you’re implying, Potter...” Fudge ground out, fear now obvious on his face. The scarlet eyes gazed steadily back at him.

“ You know *exactly* what I’m implying, Cornelius,” Harry hissed in his ear from behind him, “ I’m implying that you came all the way down here to taunt me, to see me humiliated, and prove you were better than the famous *Boy-Who-Lived*. But that’s not the way it turned out, is it Cornelius?” he asked, now facing the Minister again. Fudge

gulped audibly when he saw Harry's skin pale even further and his fangs elongate slightly. When Harry stepped into the other man's personal space and made an eerily Lecteresque slurping noise, the Minister for Magic let out a light scream and ran from the room as fast as his pudgy legs could carry him, the sound of Harry's creepy, hissing laugh following him all the way out of Azkaban.

That night Harry was in a much better mood. While his games with the unfortunate Minister had weakened his mental shields a little, he thought it was definitely worth it to have the image of Fudge's face saved in his memory for all eternity. The man had been nothing but trouble since Harry's third year at Hogwarts, and he was always glad to get a little revenge on the man who sent Dumbledore to St. Mungo's. As Harry dropped off to sleep that night, his mind was filled with the image of Cornelius Fudge running screaming from the cell. However, his dreams were soon invaded by an ominous void, sucking him towards a dark meeting in the depths of the Riddle house. As soon as he saw the setting, Harry knew immediately what was going on. He had opened the link to Voldemort, meaning visions came more easily to him. Sighing in resignation, Harry's insubstantial self made his way through the room of assembled Death Eaters and found a good vantage point, close enough to hear what the Head Snake had to say, but far enough that he could have a good overall view of the room.

Within a few minutes, the room was filled, and the last of the Death Eaters had apparated in. They formed an attentive circle around the Dark Lord, who was sitting on a large and elaborate throne. Harry snorted to himself, thinking about small people needing large furniture to boost their egos. He was drawn from his contemplations by Voldemort, who suddenly stood up and raised his hands. The Death Eaters simultaneously knelt before their master, prostrating themselves on the ground. Harry shuddered in revulsion, looking carefully at the masked figures to see if he could identify Severus.

Once the Death Eaters had pulled themselves to their feet, Voldemort addressed them all.

“ My faithful,” he called to the crowd, “ I have summoned you today to explain my final plans for the downfall of Hogwarts and the destruction of my most hated enemy, Harry Potter!”

While the followers muttered amongst themselves, Harry paled considerably. He had been cut off from all news concerning the outside world, so didn't know what had been going on. He assumed Severus had told the Evil Git about his and Dumbledore's absences. He wondered, though, when Voldemort was intending to attack if he was hoping to take out Harry at the same time. His question was answered when the Dark Lord continued.

“ My faithful followers, our greatest hour is soon at hand. As many of you will know, the Great Fool, Albus Dumbledore, has been committed to the mental ward of St. Mungo's Hospital, and Harry Potter has been incarcerated in Azkaban!”

Many cheers rang out at this news, making Harry feel vaguely nauseous, despite his incorporeal state.

“ We now have an opportunity,” Voldemort continued, “ An opportunity to strike the heart of the Light while they are at their weakest. My sources tell me that Potter will be released from Azkaban in two weeks time. I have also heard that Dementors have an amusingly strong effect on the boy. He will be severely weakened upon his return, making it easy for us to not only take over Hogwarts, but rid ourselves of the Boy-Who-Lived!”

The entire room cheered loudly, enthused by the prospect of finally taking over the wizarding world. Harry glared daggers at Voldemort, who had an incredibly smug smirk on his face. After a few minutes, he cleared his throat and regained the attention of the Death Eaters.”

“ I need every one of you preparing for the attack. The day of reckoning is coming, and on the 5th May our time will come!”

As Harry jerked awake with laughter ringing in his ears, he shuddered at what he had just heard. The date for the final battle was set, and there was nothing he could do to prepare.

Albus Dumbledore was disturbed from his contemplations several days later by a loud knocking on his door. Looking at the inconspicuous exit of the padded room in interest, he calmly waited for one of the nurses to unlock it. Sure enough, seconds later he heard the unmistakable noise of the bolts being thrown. When the door finally opened, he grinned widely and held his hand out to his unexpected visitor.

“ Eustace, my friend, how good it is to see you! Please, take a seat. I would offer you tea and lemon drops, but they took away my wand.”

“ That’s alright, Albus, I’ll take care of it,” a saddened Eustace replied as he sat down on the edge of the bed. With a wave of his wand a china tea set appeared on a conjured table.

“ So, what news from the outside?” Dumbledore asked, some of the twinkle returning to his eyes.

“ I don’t know where to start,” the eldest Potter said with a sigh, “ It’s a complete mess. Since you and Harry were taken away, the Order is in a shambles. Attacks are going unchecked. We can’t call an Order meeting. Moral is at an all time low. Glen is missing his father, as is Ginny. Voldemort is planning an attack for the fifth of May, at least that’s what Severus is telling us, and Fudge has had a nervous breakdown.”

Dumbledore raised an eyebrow in surprise, a small smile playing on his lips.

“ A breakdown? Really? What prompted *that*?”

“ Harry,” Eustace replied, rolling his eyes in amusement. Albus let out a light chuckle and shook his head.

“ Of course. What did he do *this* time?”

“ I’m not sure, but from what Arthur has heard in the Ministry, Fudge went to visit him in Azkaban and came running back out, screaming his head off.”

“ That sounds like Harry. Are you prepared for the attack on Hogwarts?” the former headmaster asked, a note of seriousness replacing the amusement in his voice. Eustace let out a loud sigh and dropped his head into his hands.

“ Without the option of calling the Order, we have to do the best we can. The Hogwarts residents who are in the Order have been rallying as many of our allies as possible, but until Harry returns we can't bring everyone together at the same time.”

“ Who have you contacted?” Albus asked.

“ Well, we managed to floo or owl most of the Order. I also sent a message to Meilani, Leilani and Vrykolakas, telling them the date of the attack. Last night I managed to get hold of Minh and her family in the elven world, so they've agreed to help when the time comes.”

“ Good good,” Dumbledore said, even though in his heart of hearts, he knew the coming battle would tear all of their lives apart.

On the first day of May, the Great Hall was abuzz with supposition as students and teachers alike speculated on Harry's mental state upon his return that morning. Most of the Slytherins were coming up with spectacular stories about how he would be almost Dementor like, having had his soul sucked out. While he wasn't participating in the gossip, Draco Malfoy certainly didn't discourage them, listening attentively to the creative notions his Housemates had dreamed up. At the other tables, the conversations followed the same subject. The Gryffindors especially were worried about Harry's mental state. They had all seen his fluctuating moods and attitudes, and his close friends in particular were concerned that the stint in prison might have thrown him so far over the edge he would be beyond help. They were pulled out of their conversations with the loud banging of the Great Hall doors as they were thrown open. As the entire Hogwarts population swivelled to look at the figure standing in the doorway, they all tried to make him out in the shadows. With a grin, Harry Potter stepped into the morning light, a dangerous glint in his eyes.

“ Good morning, everybody. I'm back.”

## Chapter Twenty Four – Counter Plans and a New Leader

“ Good morning, everybody. I’m back.”

As soon as the words were out of his mouth, Harry’s friends leapt to their feet and ran over to where the boy was standing in the doorway. Ginny, with an enthusiastic squeal, leapt at her boyfriend and wrapped her arms tightly around his neck and squeezed him tightly, before firmly planting her lips on his. Harry was surprised and a little shocked at her public display of affection, but quickly forgot about it as he kissed her back enthusiastically. Cheers went up around the Hall, but the pair was oblivious to the cat calls and scolding from Minerva. They were in their own little world, where nothing else existed but them. Harry knew that in the months he had been going out with Ginny he hadn’t exactly been the ideal boyfriend. He didn’t spend as much time with her as he would have liked to, especially with the arrival of his son, his fleeing to the Teutoburg forest and his depression eating up a lot of his time. However, he was beginning to realise that ‘absence makes the heart grow fonder’ was indeed very true. Of course, he had missed all of his friends while he was in Azkaban, but the loss of Ginny had left him feeling empty inside. As he held her now, he swore to himself that after the battle with Voldemort was over, he would make it up to her in any way he could.

Ginny was having rather similar thoughts. As far back as Harry’s first year, she had had strong feelings for the young saviour. At first, it had been a crush, but ever since the trip through time she had come to love him for the person he was. It had killed her inside to watch life throw so many things at the Boy-Who-Lived over the years, each trial wearing away at him piece by piece. She had witnessed him at his highest and lowest points, but still she loved him. She always would, no matter how many things vying for his time she had to share him with. The last month had been torture for her from start to finish. Hermione and Ron had missed their friend as well, but they had each other to cling to and draw comfort. Glen had his mother to support him, and Severus kept to himself most of the time. Ginny had no-one. She couldn’t talk to her old school friends because she had matured too much, and she now found them to be too young for

her. They hadn't been there, and so couldn't relate. Now that she had him back, though, she wouldn't let him go for the world.

When Ginny and Harry finally pulled apart, the young vampire was greeted with hugs from his other friends. Severus, for obvious reasons, didn't greet him, but a glance at the Head Table showed that the Potions Master had a faint smile playing on his lips. Once the commotion died down, Harry made his way to the Gryffindor table, where his Housemates immediately started hurling questions at him. After ten minutes of answering as best he could, Harry made his excuses and left the Hall, pulling Ginny behind him by the hand, and followed close behind by Hermione, Ron and Glen. As soon as he was out of the door, he placed his hand on a nearby wall and led the small group into his hidden room. Five minutes later, the students were joined by Severus, Heather, 'Tea and Peeves, as well as Sirius and Remus, who had been quickly summoned by Harry's aunt. Once everyone was comfortable, the inevitable questioning began.

"How do you feel, Harry?" Sirius asked first, a question which everyone had undoubtedly been thinking. Sirius, though, knew how it felt to spend time in Azkaban, something the others couldn't really relate to.

"Well, I've been better," Harry answered truthfully, "Azkaban's not exactly the most fun place in the world, but I survived it alright. My mental gift helped enormously, keeping the Dementors away for almost three weeks. I also had a little fun with Fudge, which kept my spirits up."

After being questioned about Fudge, Harry told them the whole story. When he described the way the Minister ran screaming from the cell, everyone laughed for a good ten minutes. Cornelius Fudge was despised by most of the group for varying reasons, so to hear Harry get one up on him certainly brightened their day. Once they had all calmed down, Harry told them about how his mental shields had gradually broken down during the third week, letting the Dementors affect him more and more. His eyes became slightly haunted when he described the things he had had to relive. His parents' deaths were prominent, as well as his time in Grindelwald's headquarters. Glen started crying, though, when his father

mentioned that his most painful memory was the moment he had to leave 'Tea after finding out she was carrying his child. The ghost had hung her head when she heard this, and Ginny had hugged him tightly and soothed him as he began to cry, his sniffles eventually turning into sobs as he let out some of his grief. He still had a lot of pain to deal with, and the Dementors had brought back some of the darkest times in his past. Crying, though, was a release, and none of his friends made him feel ashamed for breaking down. Ever since his mental state had first been questioned, Harry had been very conscious of losing his humanity and turning into another Dark Lord. While before he would have been embarrassed by his weakness by crying in front of others, now he was relieved and welcomed it, knowing it proved he still had feelings. It made him human.

Once he had calmed down and the friends had caught up, they discussed the situation with Voldemort for a while, Harry and Severus comparing their views of the meeting revealing the Dark Lord's plans of attack. After a while, Harry let out a loud sigh and came to a decision.

"I'll have to call an Order meeting," he said slowly, thinking it over carefully, "With Dumbledore 'unavailable', I'm the only one who can call a meeting. I'll do it tonight, which will give us four full days to plan for the attack. Voldemort thinks I'm weak from my stay in Azkaban, and I must admit that I'm not feeling up to scratch, but it could have been a lot worse. Voldie doesn't know that I can block the effects of the Dementors for such a long period, so I'll make sure to act weak in front of the rest of the students for the next few days. Any Death Eater children can report back that I'm in a bad state, despite putting on a brave face when I first arrived. I'll try and be subtle, as if I'm trying to hide the problem. We should be able to surprise the Head Snake when the time comes, giving us the advantage."

"What if one of the Slytherins figures it out?" Remus asked, "I mean, after all, they are known for being cunning."

"Cunning they may be, Moony," Harry said with a wicked grin, "But you forget that so am I. I did, after all, spend a year in their House



during Voldemort's first reign. I have outsmarted Lucius Malfoy several times, I'm sure I can deal with the current students."

"I hope so, Harry, for *your* sake," Heather said with a frown.

"Don't worry, Aunt Heather. I'll be fine."

Ron decided to change the subject, knowing that they had been covering some painful and serious topics over the last couple of hours. He was thankful that it was May Day, and the school had the day off from lessons. It meant they could all spend the day together planning for the attack, and letting Harry relax after his ordeal. The redhead decided it was time for some recreation after such heavy discussion.

"Hey, guys," he said, "What do you say we have some fun. Harry mate, you've been in prison for a month. I think it's time to let your hair down!"

Harry laughed, giving Ginny, who was sitting on his lap, a quick peck on the cheek.

"And what do you have in mind?" he asked. Ron grinned back wickedly.

"I feel like a party. What do you say?"

The students all readily agreed, deciding who they should invite to join them. After all, the more the merrier. The adults watched on in amusement, deciding for once they weren't going to act like teachers and stop them. If anyone deserved some fun, it was this group. Glen was joining in enthusiastically with the planning. After all, it was his first real 20th century party, and he was curious to see what sort of things teenagers got up to in this age.

Half an hour later, the whole thing was fully organised. Fred and George Weasley had been quickly summoned and sent to Hogsmeade via one of the secret tunnels to bring supplies. Sev and Heather had sent them disapproving looks, but after Harry's pleading they quickly relented. They both owed the younger man a lot, so they thought it would be alright to let it slide just once. Some other people

had also been invited to the party, but not too many. After all, with Sirius attending, they had to be careful who was there. Eustace was one of the first to arrive there, having floored in from Corvus Corax, bringing a couple of the younger Order members with him, Nymphadora Tonks and Charlie Weasley. Once everyone had arrived, Hermione started her magically enhanced CD player and chose a mixed summer album with cheesy Muggle pop music. It suited everybody, and before long the group, including the adults, was dancing merrily. At lunch time, the Weasley twins brought out the supplies from Hogsmeade, including a crate of butterbeer, and two bottles of Ogden's Firewhiskey. Severus scowled at them when he saw the latter, but a light smack on the back of the head from an amused Heather made him roll his eyes in resignation and accept a glass of the amber liquid. Before long, Charlie made the suggestion everyone had been waiting for.

"Anybody up for playing a game?"

The partygoers quickly agreed, all sitting in the middle of the room's training mats in a circle.

"What shall we play?" Tonks asked.

"How about spin the bottle?" Hermione suggested.

"You can't be serious!" Fred exclaimed.

"No, that's me," Sirius yelled. Everyone rolled their eyes at the old joke, all having heard it countless times before. The only one who never tired of it was the animagus himself.

"What's wrong with spin the bottle?" Hermione asked.

"Would *you* want to kiss half the people in this room?" Eustace asked, smirking.

"Especially the teachers," George agreed, looking at Severus and Heather. The Potions Master made a face at the thought, looking over at Remus and Sirius in disgust. Harry, Ginny and Glen started to giggle. Hermione, however, crossed her arms and sulked.

“ Fine, *you* come up with a better suggestion,” she said.

“ We should play a drinking game,” Ron said.

“ Or truth or dare!” Ginny squealed, getting excited at the prospect. Most of the group groaned at this suggestion.

“ How about ‘I never’”, Harry suggested.

“ How about a combination,” Tonks said. Everyone looked at her strangely.

“ What?” she asked, “ It’s a good idea. One person spins the bottle. The person it lands on is asked ‘truth or dare’. If they choose dare, they have to do something really embarrassing, if they choose truth, they have to say ‘I never’. Then we follow the ‘I never’ rules and drink if we did the thing they say. Then that person spins the bottle.”

“ That’s not bad, if a little bizarre,” Fred conceded.

“ True, I’m up for it,” George said.

The rest of the party goers looked at each other and shrugged. Sev was the first to lay down any ground rules.

“ I’m game for playing,” he said, surprising some of them, “ But I suggest we lay down a few rules, such as no dares that could lead to permanent damage to property or any harm to a person. Also, anything said under ‘truth’ should be kept strictly between us. No spreading vicious rumours around the school or using things said for blackmail.”

They all readily agreed, and Harry cast a quick spell over them, similar to the Order secrecy spell, preventing them from conveying the information to anyone else. Once everything was settled, Ginny conjured a bottle and placed it in the middle of the circle. They all filled their glasses with a shot of Firewhiskey, and Harry was told to go first. The bottle landed on his son.

“ Glen, truth or dare?”

Glen, never having played any of the games before, unwisely chose dare. Harry grinned at him wickedly.

“ I dare you to attend tonight’s Order meeting in your underwear.”

The look on Glen’s face was priceless. The people of his time were a lot more conservative, and the idea of wandering around mostly naked in public frightened him a little. He immediately turned bright red, much to everyone’s amusement.

“ W-what if I refuse,” he asked, nervously.

“ You have to do a forfeit, which is usually a lot worse,” Hermione told him. Glen paled.

“ A-alright, I suppose I’ll have to do it, then.”

Glen, with shaking hand, reached forward and span the bottle, which landed on Tonks. The Metamorphmagus grinned at him.

“ Dare,” she said. Everyone groaned.

“ Erm…” Glen wasn’t sure what to say. Looking around, he opted for something simple.

“ I dare you to ask Professor Flitwick out on a date at dinner.”

Tonks giggled insanely and quickly wrote the dare down on a conjured notepad, so she didn’t forget about it. She added Glen’s dare as well, so they could keep track of everything. Once this was done, she span the bottle and laughed maniacally when it landed on Severus. The spy took one look at her and groaned.

“ Do I have to?” he asked.

“ You agreed to play,” Harry pointed out.

“ Indeed. I suppose I’ll choose truth. I shudder to think what that insane woman would come up with.”

Tonks looked a little disappointed at this, but picked up her drink in anticipation of his admission. Severus cleared his throat loudly and raised his glass.

“ I never did the twist in public,” he stated, and quickly drank his Firewhiskey. Several people choked on their laughter, but Hermione, Tonks, Eustace, Charlie and the twins all finished their drinks. That done, Severus span the bottle and it landed on Ginny. She smiled at Harry.

“ I never fell in love,” she said, taking a drink. Harry quickly followed suit, as did Ron, Hermione, Eustace, Charlie and Tonks. The next spin of the bottle landed on Ron, who chose dare. Ginny, remembering Severus’ admission, asked him to stand in the middle of the circle and do the twist. The redhead blushed, but when Hermione put the song on her CD player, he had no choice. His sister quickly summoned her camera as Ron made a fool of himself dancing in front of everyone. Fred and George found the whole thing hilarious, promising to send photos to their mother. The game continued for another hour in the same way, with dares mounting up and small tidbits of information being revealed to everyone. The group was also becoming increasingly drunk, making people’s inhibitions slowly disappear. When they were getting near the end of their second bottle of Firewhiskey, the ‘truth’ part of the game suddenly took a darker turn.

“ I never killed anyone,” Fred proclaimed.

Some of those seated looked at each other a little uncomfortably, before Severus, Eustace and Heather all took up their glasses and drank. When Fred span the bottle, and it landed on Remus, the werewolf let out a long sigh.

“ Well, seeing as we’re on the difficult ones, I never felt depressed.”

He took a drink, as did Harry, Heather, Sev, Sirius and Eustace. The next spin of the bottle landed on Harry. With pain filled eyes slightly glazed with alcohol consumption, Harry raised his glass high.

“ I never felt suicidal.”

Taking a large gulp, he smacked his glass down on the mat. His friends looked at him in horror, Ginny grabbing his hand. The group was further shocked when the same people as before took a drink.

“ Why?” Hermione asked in disbelief.

“ When I was turned,” Harry said simply, squeezing his girlfriend’s hand, “ But then I found Ginny, and I love her so much, I don’t want to ever leave her.”

“ After I was bitten,” Remus admitted.

“ While I was in Azkaban,” Sirius whispered.

“ When Voldemort had me,” Heather said, tears falling down her cheeks.

“ After I went to the elf world,” Eustace said, “ Knowing I was leaving everything behind, and knowing it would be the last time I saw my son alive.”

“ Every day for the last twenty years,” Severus said, refilling his glass and taking another drink. The rest looked at him in disbelief. Severus just shrugged.

“ Don’t worry about it. In four days it’ll all be over, either way.”

Everyone nodded, all now in a melancholy mood. Fred and George grabbed the last bottle and shared the rest of the Firewhiskey before standing in front of everyone and taking a bow.

“ We never played a prank,” they said simultaneously, causing everyone to burst out laughing, and lightening the mood considerably.

At dinner that night, the group from the party all filed into the Great Hall laughing and joking, their few moments of gravity having left no lasting impression. They had all taken a sobering potion before they left Harry’s room, but it wouldn’t kick in until after they ate something. The Slytherins and teachers watched in bemusement as Severus walked through the door, giving a blue haired Tonks a piggyback ride. They were further disturbed when he deposited the

Metamorphmagus at the Head Table right in front of the tiny Charms professor. Tonks wrinkled her face in concentration and her hair turned bright pink, before she got down on one knee in front of Flitwick.

“ Filius, I humbly ask if you would consider going on a date with me.”

The normally energetic man sat stock still, gaping at the Auror in disbelief.

“ I-I don’t know what to say. Why are you asking? And in public...” he said, looking around at the watching students.

“ I’m sorry, old chap,” she said brightly, “ I was dared to ask you out. The offer still stands, though. It’s the least I can do for showing you up in front of everyone.”

Flitwick blushed bright red.

“ We’ll discuss this later, Nymphadora,” he whispered. The Auror nodded enthusiastically and went to sit with the time travellers at the Gryffindor table. She arrived just as Hermione was proposing to Neville. Harry, Ron and Ginny were giggling maniacally, the alcohol still influencing them. By the end of dinner, though, the effects of the potion had kicked in and the group was feeling a lot less jolly and a lot more embarrassed. With a groan of resignation, Harry looked at his friends.

“ I guess we’d better get this over with,” he said, sending out a tingle through the Order marks and calling a full meeting.

As soon as dinner finished, the Order members currently in Hogwarts all headed straight to Domus Corvus Corax, Glen in his underwear. The teachers who had not been present at the party were all giving him strange looks. As soon as they arrived at the Order headquarters they were met by hundreds of people milling around in the entrance hall and the ballroom. Harry quickly sent up sparks and asked everyone to enter the meeting room and take a seat. He quickly conjured an extra set of chairs and several more tables. It was rare for a full Order meeting to be called, as there were so many people, but in this case it was necessary. Just as people

were getting settled, a loud pop came from the corner of the room. Looking over, a large grin appeared on Harry's face and he ran over to the new arrivals.

"Minh! Gaerwyn! Lolide! It's so great to see you!"

"It's great to see you as well, Harry," Minh said, giving her grandson a tight hug. The sisters quickly followed suit. Their reunion was interrupted by a voice calling out from behind them in elvish.

"Mother! Aunt Gaerwyn!" Leilani called as she and her sister ran across the room and into their mother's waiting arms. For the two banished elves, it had been hundreds of years since they had seen their family. Not knowing exactly where they were, Lolide and Gaerwyn hadn't been able to visit them when they had been in Britain helping the Order in previous eras. The reunion was joyful, and Harry stepped back to allow them to speak for a few minutes. While he was waiting, he went to talk to the leader of the vampires.

"Well, Vry, this is it."

"What's happening, Harry?" he asked.

"The final battle's coming. Are your people ready to change the world's opinion of you?"

"We have been waiting for this opportunity for centuries," he said, solemnly, "This will be our finest hour. We will make you proud."

"I'm sure you will, Vry. I have every confidence in you."

Once Harry was sure everyone had arrived, he took his place at the council table where Dumbledore normally sat and sent up sparks to gain everyone's attention. As soon as he was sure they were all listening, he cast a sonorus charm on his throat and addressed them.

"Thank you all for coming today. As will probably know, we have been having difficulties for the last month, since we lost Albus Dumbledore to St. Mungo's and I was sent to Azkaban. No Order meetings were called, and the wizarding world is descending into chaos. Now, our leader is still absent, and there is little we can do



about it at the moment. Breaking him out will lose us any support we may have had from the Ministry and the Aurors. As his right hand man, and the only other person capable of summoning the Order, I am assuming command of the Order of the Phoenix for the foreseeable future. Does anyone have a problem with that?"

A recently inducted Ministry official cleared his throat.

" Mr. Potter, I realise you have been placed in the position of second in command, but are you sure you are capable of actually leading the Order?"

Harry sent the man a cool glare before answering.

" I ran the original Order, the one established in 1944. I only gave the position to Albus Dumbledore when I left that time period. I trusted his judgment, and I still do. However, he is not here at the moment, and I am. Does anyone else in this room have first hand experience of leading the Order?" he asked. No one answered.

" I thought not. Now, if you wish, you can push for a vote of no confidence. Will that be necessary, Mr. Todmoore?"

The man meekly shook his head and lowered his gaze. Harry nodded once before resuming his speech.

" As some of you will know, Voldemort plans to attack Hogwarts on the 5th May."

There was an immediate uproar. People were starting to panic at the idea. Hogwarts hadn't been attacked in recent history, but the Dark Lord was powerful, and may win. If he gained control of the wizarding school, the rest of the British wizarding world would soon follow. Before full blown panic could set in, Harry sent up sparks to gain their attention.

" Please don't panic. We have four days, and I plan to be ready. You all now know about the attack, and I want you to prepare to fight. Voldemort believes I will be weakened from my stint in Azkaban, and I plan to continue letting him think that. This is the big

one. The final, decisive battle in the war against Voldemort, and we *will* win.”

“ How?” Mundungus Fletcher asked. Harry smirked at him.

“ Because I have a plan.”

## Chapter Twenty Five – The Day of Reckoning

“ Because I have a plan,” Harry said, waiting a beat to let the news sink in before snapping his fingers and holding out his hand. A large scroll appeared out of thin air, startling some of the onlookers. Harry placed the parchment onto the table in front of him and slowly unrolled it, everyone’s attention focused on the plan in front of them. The scroll revealed a detailed map of the Hogwarts grounds, with different areas shaded in different colours. Each colour had a tiny label, showing the areas to be different groups of people. Once he knew he had everyone’s attention, Harry continued.

“ While I was in Azkaban, I wasn’t just sitting there doing nothing. As soon as I found out about the imminent attack, I started to plan. While I was confined in an anti-magic field, I found I could use some limited elven magic, which I used to create light in my cell. As some of you may know, the floors of Azkaban prison cells are made of dirt. I spent the last week and a half coming up with this plan by drawing it on the floor of my cell. I believe I’ve perfected it as much as I can, but any input will be appreciated.”

“ So, what’s the plan?” Ron asked.

“ There are several phases, and I need each and every one of you to do your part exactly as instructed, or it won’t work. If there is anybody here who doesn’t want to fight, I need you to let me know immediately. Obviously, I’ll need the Healers, Medi wizards and Mediwitches here at Corvus Corax to deal with the injured. Anyone else, though, who doesn’t want to fight, please tell me.”

As he looked around the crowd, meeting each and every pair of eyes, Harry saw a great deal of fear, but also a great deal of determination. After all, this was the battle they had been waiting for, the one which would decide the fate of the wizarding world. A lot of the Order members had families to worry about, and knew that even if they died in the battle, they were fighting for something worthwhile. They were fighting for the freedom of their society, and securing a safe future for their loved ones. When nobody said they didn’t want to take part, a smile appeared on Harry’s lips.

“ I am very proud of all of you. As you will know, people in this room are going to die. It’s a chance we will have to take, but it will be worth it to rid the world of a creature that has plagued us for fifty years. In four days time, we will eliminate the monster threatening our lives, and take back what is rightfully ours. Our freedom!”

The room burst into cheers as Harry finished his speech. He knew that he would lose people. They all knew. But the battle had to be fought, had to be won. The Boy-Who-Lived had suffered time and again as a result of Voldemort’s actions, and he was relishing the thought of finally ridding the world of his parents’ murderer. He would succeed. He was positive. With a grin, he gestured for the Order to quieten down, before magically enlarging his plan so that it filled the entire council table.

“ Everyone, if I could have your attention, please. We need to go over the plan,” he said.

“ Are you sure this will work?” Ginny asked him, taking his hand and looking over the parchment.

“ I’m sure of it. Ever since I realised that the final battle would eventually be held at the school, I’ve been making tentative plans, adjusting them every time we gained a new ally. Now, though, they are finalised. This is the big one, Gin, and I don’t want to mess it up in any way,” he told her.

“ You won’t mess it up, Harry. We all have confidence in you,” she told him. Harry gave her a sad smile.

“ You may all have confidence in me, Gin, but I don’t have confidence in myself,” he admitted with a sigh, “ I have a habit of messing things up, especially lately, and I just know something’s going to go wrong. My plan for finally getting rid of the Head Snake is dangerous, and I need the help of all of you. What if I make a miscalculation that means you die? Or Glen dies? Or Ron and ‘Mione? I don’t know if I could live with myself if that happened.”

“ Harry, that won’t happen. We can take care of ourselves.”

“ I know, Gin, I know. But I need you to promise me something.”

“ What is it?” she asked, slightly worried. He took both of her hands in his and squeezed them tightly.

“ If anything happens to me...”

“ Harry, that won’t happen!” she interrupted.

“ You don’t know that,” he said to her, “ If anything happens to me, I want you to make sure Glen gets home. Can you do that for me?”

“ Of course, Harry, you know I will. But you aren’t going to die.”

“ It’s always a possibility,” he whispered, “ You know that as well as I do. I’m protected from the Killing Curse, and Voldemort himself can’t deal the killing blow because of the Mark, but there are plenty of other methods, and hundreds of Death Eaters. We have to be prepared for the worst. If I die, Ginny, I don’t want you to be alone, Ginny. Promise you will move on and find someone else.”

By this point, Ginny was openly crying, and the pair had attracted the attention of Ron, Hermione and Glenadade, who were listening intently, all with silent tears rolling down their cheeks. Harry’s planning for the worst made them realise just how imminent the final battle was, and what the consequences could be. Ginny, sobbing slightly, threw her arms around her boyfriend and whispered in his ear.

Once the group had calmed down and the rest of the Order members had finished discussing the battle amongst themselves, Harry called them all to order.

“ Ok, I need you all to split yourselves into groups. I want each group to sit at a different table, and I will come around to each of you and tell you what is going to happen in your area, and what I want you to do. Clear?”

The people in the crowd nodded and all stood up. Harry herded them to one side of the room, while he rearranged the tables and turned them each a different colour. Once he was done, he stood in front of the crowd.

“ Right, listen up. I want Hogwarts students, with the exception of Glen, Gin, Ron and ‘Mione, to go to the red table. You will be in charge of dealing with the students inside Hogwarts during the battle. Keeping order, organising the older students to defend from the windows, that sort of thing. Vrykolakas, Mei, Lei and Gaerwyn, please go to the yellow table. You will be leading your own people, the vampires fighting the werewolves and dark vampires, and the elves dealing with the Dementors. Healers, to the blue table, you will be bringing the injured here and dealing with them. Aurors to the green table. I need you as the main attack force, the front line, if you will. Anyone with duelling experience, and I’m talking real experience, not just a fight in your common room at school, join the green table as well. Sirius, Remus, Severus, go to the council table, I have a special job for you. Everyone else, I need anyone skilled with magical creatures to go to the purple table, as you will be dealing with anything Voldemort throws at us, giants, lethifolds, anything like that. The rest of you will be at the orange table, you will be the second wave, defending the perimeter of the school. Any questions?”

No-one complained, and they all made their way to their designated table. The time travellers all joined Sirius, Remus and Severus at the Order council table.

“ What are we supposed to do?” Remus asked.

“ I need your help with something,” Harry asked, “ We have to get Dumbledore out of St. Mungo’s before the battle starts, but after Voldemort gets to Hogwarts.”

“ Why such a short window?” Sirius asked, “ Why can’t we get him earlier?”

“ Because as much as me may dislike the fact, Fudge is still the Minister for Magic. He can overrule us all, and have us arrested immediately. Knowing him, he will come to Hogwarts with the Aurors loyal to him and start arresting the Order members. If Voldemort turns up after a load of us have been sent to Azkaban, we won’t stand a chance. However, the odds will be more in our favour if we have Dumbledore here to fight with us. We need him.”

“ So what do you want us to do?” the Potions Master asked.

“ I need you to break into St. Mungo's just as Voldemort and the Death Eaters are about to leave from their hideout.”

“ I suppose you want *me* to take care of that?”

“ That's right, Sev. When they are about to leave, I need you to portkey to the hospital, where you will meet Sirius and Remus. Then, you need to get into the mental ward, grab the headmaster, and get back to Hogwarts. I'll give you a portkey for that.”

“ So Fudge will find out...” Sirius said in dawning comprehension.

“...he'll follow you to Hogwarts with the rest of the Aurors...” Remus continued.

“...and find the battle taking place, with no choice but to join in,” Sev concluded, a smile tugging at his lips.

“ Precisely,” Harry beamed, “ We'll get backup for the battle that Voldemort won't be expecting.

“ That's bloody brilliant,” Ron said with a grin. Hermione nodded her head, and Glen had a proud look on his face.

“ As I said, it's the best plan I've come up with in the last week and a half. Now, you four,” Harry said, turning to the other time travellers, “ I need you to help me defeat Voldemort. Obviously, I need you to fight in the rest of the battle at the same time, but our job is to defeat Voldie once and for all. Remember the Prophecy of the Four? ‘The Healer, the Seer, the Lion and the Wise One’ will defeat Voldemort. Glen, I want you to help, even though I don't think you're in the prophecy. Between us, we'll incapacitate him. I need you all to promise me, and this means you as well, Sev, Siri and Remus, I need you to fight full out. No holding back. If you have a special skill, use it. Animagus forms, wandless magic, anything. Dark magic, Light magic, it doesn't matter. Our main objective is to win; we'll deal with the consequences later. Deal?”

The group all readily agreed, and Harry spent the rest of the evening talking to the different groups and planning how to beat the darkness once and for all. Harry was tired of saving the world, tired of battling Dark Lords, and tired of having everyone relying on him. After this, he promised himself, he would have a nice, long holiday.

The next few days until the battle passed far too quickly. Everyone was getting in as much practice as possible, but without letting the other students find out. Harry was doing a good job of pretending to be weak after his time in Azkaban, and a lot of the Hogwarts residents kept sending him contemptuous or sympathetic looks. His acting was having the right effect, though. There was no way Voldemort would believe Harry was in full fighting order on the fifth.

By the time the eve of the battle came, the Order members were starting to get nervous. Harry called a final Order meeting that night to go over the last few details before the attack. At the end of the evening, he handed everyone a vial of Dreamless Sleep potion and asked them to take it at eight o'clock. It would ensure everyone had received enough sleep to be fresh. It would also make them wake up at five in the morning, at which time they were to get themselves ready, speak to their families, and prepare to apparate to Hogwarts as soon as they were given the signal. Just as everyone was leaving, Harry reassured them that everything would be well, but knew in his heart of hearts that a lot of things could go wrong.

The next morning, Harry was up at five in the morning as planned. After getting quickly showered and dressed, he met with the other time travellers, Severus, Remus and Sirius in his room at five thirty. They made themselves as comfortable as possible, calling on Dobby to bring them breakfast, even though none of them were really hungry.

They discussed inconsequential things for a while until six o'clock rolled around. Sev trailed off half way through a sentence, gripping his arm where the Dark Mark was positioned.

"This is it," he said, gritting his teeth through the pain. Harry reached out along his link to the Dark Mark and took the pain away. Once that



was done, he pulled a small coin out of his pocket and gave it to the Potions Master.

“Sev, when you need to leave, hold it and say ‘St. Mungo’s’. It’ll take you to your rendez vous place. Sirius and Remus will be there. When you get Dumbledore, all hold on to it and say ‘Hogwarts’. Alright?”

“Yes, I’m as ready as I’ll ever be,” Sev muttered.

“Are you fully equipped for the battle? Have you got your knives and sword?” Harry asked.

“Yes, I have everything,” the Slytherin reassured him. Harry smiled back at him weakly.

“Take care,” the younger man said, giving his friend and teacher a firm hug. Sev nodded to each of the others in the room and flooed to Corvus Corax to apparate to the meeting. As soon as he was gone, Harry gave Sirius and Remus their own portkey to St. Mungo’s and wished them luck. Eventually, he took a deep breath and activated the Order Marks, calling the Order to Hogwarts.

In the Teutoburg forest, Vrykolakas, Meilani and Leilani felt the tingle in their Order Marks and immediately stopped what they were doing. Leaping to their feet, they raced to the centre of their palace and climbed to the top of the tallest tower, where three large horns were located. Positioning themselves in front of the horns, they blew as much as they could. Normally, such a thing would be done with magic, but as a precaution to prevent pranks, each horn was attuned to one of the leaders, meaning they had to blow in them themselves. A loud, melodic sound came from each of the three instruments, echoing across the city. Vampires and elves of all ages came running out of their homes and gathered in the market place outside of the castle. After a few minutes, the elves and the vampire moved onto a large balcony to address their people. Vrykolakas started by casting a sonorus charm on his throat.

“People of Teutoburg City. The time has finally come for us to come out of the shadows and return to our rightful place in the world. As you know, the current Dark Lord of the Wizarding World, Voldemort,

is planning to take over Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry today. We will not let this happen. We will fight with our allies for the side of Light, and regain the trust of the wizarding world. It is time for us to come out of exile and show the magical community what it means to be a vampire. We will show them our courage and willingness to stand up for what is right. Today, we gain our freedom!"

The vampires in the crowd cheered. After all, this is what they had been waiting all of their lives for. Meilani magically enhanced her voice to speak to the elves.

" People of the old world," she called, " Like our friends the vampires, we have been forced to hide in the shadows for too long. The humans of this world have forgotten us, and forgotten the power we have. But we have not forgotten the reason we are here. We came here to befriend the humans, to forge a future together, and show them that we can live in peace and harmony in the same society. Today, we finally have the chance to reemerge from the shadows and take back our place in the wizarding world. Today, we fight!"

More cheers sounded, as those willing to fight started to move to the front of the market place, the mothers and children heading back to their homes to await the return of their loved ones. Meanwhile, Leilani stood to say her piece.

" Citizens of Teutoburg City. We will all be leaving in a few minutes. The elves will go first, our job being to set up a sun blocking field over the Hogwarts grounds. The vampires will follow in ten minutes. Elves, our job is to fight the Dementors, and we will get into position by the school lake. Vampires, you will battle the werewolves and your evil cousins, gathering by the forbidden forest. Alright, elves, move out!"

With a roar from the crowd, the elves began transporting themselves to Hogwarts.

While the Order of the Phoenix members were gathering at Hogwarts and getting into position, Severus apparated to the Death Eater meeting and took his place in Voldemort's ranks. The Dark Lord was

standing in front of his throne, pacing. Once everyone had arrived, he turned to his followers and gave them a wicked grin.

“ Congratulations to you all. You will be the witches and wizards who today will see the fall of the old regime and the dawn of a new era in wizarding history. Today, we will take over the wizarding world once and for all, destroying the meddlesome Potter boy and conquering Hogwarts in one fell swoop. Today, we make history. Today, we become Gods! Prepare to move out.”

The Death Eaters cheered, and Sev began to feel slightly nauseous. As quietly as possible, he made his way to the back of the crowd, trying not to draw attention to himself. As soon as he was sure no-one would see him, he activated his portkey and vanished from the dark room, the sound of cheering ringing in his ears.

When he reappeared, he found himself in the middle of a hospital corridor. Looking around, he spotted Sirius and Remus leaning against a wall. Making his way over to them, he cleared his throat.

“ Lupin, Black, have you found out where they’re keeping him?”

“ Yes, he’s in the room at the end of the corridor,” Remus told him, and the three started heading towards the sealed door. As they got close, three security wizards stepped in front of them.

“ Where do you three think you’re going?” one of them asked.

“ We need to speak to Albus Dumbledore,” Sirius stated.

“ You can’t go in there,” the leader told them, “ We have orders from the Minister himself that nobody is allowed into that room unless they have an appointment made at least two weeks in advance.”

“ Look, you infernal man, either you move and allow us entrance, or we will be forced to fell you. The choice is yours,” Sev said with a sneer. The man gave him a contemptuous look.

“ Sir, I don’t believe you could do that. We are highly trained...”

He was cut off when Severus raised his hand and made a shoving motion. All three security wizards went flying into the wall. Sirius and Remus just gaped at the Potions Master. Sev raised an eyebrow at them.

“ What? Don’t tell me you imbeciles have never seen wandless magic before,” he said, before flicking his wrist at the heavily warded door, making it swing open with a slight click. The two astonished Marauders followed the other man into the room quietly, not knowing what to say.

Albus Dumbledore had been startled out of his sleep by the commotion outside, and when the three wizards came striding into his padded cell, his eyes began twinkling madly.

“ Well, well, well, now this is a surprise,” he said.

“ We have no time to argue, Albus,” Severus said, “ We have to get out of here. Accio wand.”

Dumbledore’s wand came flying out of one of the security wizards’ pockets, where it had obviously been placed for safekeeping. Handing the wand to its owner, Severus pulled out the portkey and rested it on his palm, holding his hand out for everyone to touch it. As soon as they were ready, he whispered the activation word, and the four were whisked off to join the battle.

At Hogwarts, Harry had been running around madly, trying to get everyone organised. As soon as the elves had arrived from Teutoburg City, they had begun setting up the shield to protect their vampire allies from the sun. The rest of the arriving Order members had been arranged into their appropriate areas, and Ginny had checked to make sure the students were all in their Houses. Once she was sure, she went around with the red group and secured the common room entrances, keeping the students locked in and the Death Eaters locked out. Meanwhile, Ron was co-ordinating the placement of the troops with Harry and Hermione was dealing with the elves and the arriving vampires. Glen was in charge of bringing the headmaster up to speed when he arrived with a pop. Just as everyone was getting into place, there were a series of loud pops as the Death Eaters started arriving on the other side of the grounds,

just out side of the wards. Despite the witches and wizards waiting by the school from them, the Dark Lord boldly led them forward until they came to a stop several hundred feet from the opposing side. The battle was about to begin.

Harry, although nervous, connected his mind with the leaders of each group, making sure they were all in place. The students in higher years were all positioned in the windows of Hogwarts, ready to defend the castle and protect the younger years as best they could. The Dementors, werewolves and vampires in Voldemort's ranks all had opponents in his own army. Dumbledore was at his side, taking command of the second wave. His friends and family were lined up behind him, ready to give their lives in the battle they had been building up to for eight years. This was it; the day of reckoning had finally come.

With a loud battle cry, Harry leapt into action and began racing across the field, the Aurors, elves and vampires right behind him. With a roar from the Slytherin heir, the Death Eaters surged forward as well, meeting the Light side in the middle of the Hogwarts grounds. Curses, hexes and jinxes flew left, right and centre, and the battleground descended into chaos.

Harry, fighting side by side with Glen and Hermione, was using Light and Dark wandless magic to knock out as may Death Eaters as possible. He still didn't want to fall to his nemesis' level by killing anyone, but it was becoming increasingly difficult to fell the enemy. In his peripheral vision, the Boy-Who-Lived spotted the Ministry Aurors arriving, Fudge in the fore. The look on the Minister's face when he saw what he had stumbled into was priceless, and Harry made the mistake of pausing for several precious seconds to watch the pompous man's reaction. This proved tragic, for just as Harry was about to curse the Death Eater in front of him, he felt a searing pain in his chest. Horrified, he looked down in disbelief to where the tip of a dagger was pointing out of his ribcage, right where his heart was. As the saviour fell to his knees in agony, blood dripping from his mouth and his vision blurring, he looked behind him and into the cool black eyes of the man who had stabbed him. Harry's eyes widened in shock when he saw who it was, and

the last thing he did before the darkness finally took him was mumble a single question.

“ Sev?”

## Chapter Twenty Six – The Boy-Who-...

Around the battle field, several people paused in their fighting when they heard a loud mental scream echoing through their heads. The time travellers and Harry's other friends all looked over in the direction they had last seen the boy fighting, and watched as the dagger was plunged deep into his chest. When the saviour collapsed to the ground, coughing up blood, the spectators followed his line of sight to the tall, imposing figure standing above him, a smug look on its face.

Ginny let out a loud gasp when she saw Harry collapse, a deep pain resonating in her chest as she watched the man she loved with all of her heart dying in front of her. She didn't know what to think, or what to do. She glared with hatred at the man standing over the crumpled body of the Boy-Who-Lived, taking in the pitch black robes, elegant figure and pale complexion. At her side, she heard Glenadade growl angrily and start forward. Noticing this, she quickly grabbed his arm and pulled him back, a look of dawning horror on her face as she realised who the Death Eater was.

"Glen, no," she whispered to him frantically. The ancient boy still struggled to escape her grip.

"He killed my father!" he roared.

"I know," the redhead soothed, "But there's nothing we can do about that at the moment. We need to see if Harry's still alive, and if he is he needs healing. We need to find Ron. Harry's the priority, not Severus!"

"But..."

"Glen, there will be time for revenge later, but for now your father needs you!"

The youngest Potter sighed reluctantly and the pair turned themselves invisible so as to keep out of the fighting and went to locate the other time travellers.

On the other side of the battle field to Glen and Ginny, Ron and Hermione were frantically fighting a group of Death Eaters who were determined to take advantage of the two's distracted states. Ever since they had seen Harry drop, Ron knew he had to make his way over to his friend and see if there was anything he could do for him. However, the inner circle members they had been fighting wouldn't let them leave, attacking them more enthusiastically than before. The pair weren't stupid, though. They knew that the Death Eaters must have thought this through beforehand. They must have noticed from previous battles that Ron was a Healer, so they knew to keep him busy until it was too late for the young saviour.

Ron and Hermione frantically fought for what seemed like hours, but was in fact only several minutes, all the time worrying about their fallen friend. Their hearts leapt with hope, though, when Ginny and Glen appeared suddenly behind their masked opponents, quickly joining the fight. Before long, the group of Death Eaters was lying on the ground, each and every one of them unconscious.

"Thanks, guys," Ron gasped.

"You're welcome, Ron, but we have more pressing issues here," Ginny gasped.

"Harry," Hermione stated.

"Yes. You need to help him, Ron," Glen said.

"I know. What about Snape, though? I mean, he betrayed Harry! We need to take care of him!" Ron growled. His girlfriend laid a hand on his shoulder and urged him to turn around.

"Ron, look," she said.

"What?" he asked in confusion.

"Look at the man standing over Harry. Severus didn't betray him."

"What do you mean, 'Mione," Ron roared, "He's standing right there! You saw him do it."



“ No, I didn’t. Severus didn’t betray Harry, because that man isn’t Severus.”

Over near the school, Heather looked up when the Ministry Aurors turned up and became rather nervous. She was still afraid of them, even though she knew she wouldn’t be carted off to Azkaban, and stood still for a moment to watch Fudge’s shocked face and the new arrivals rushing to join the fight without being ordered to do so. Her attention was quickly averted from the new arrivals as she noticed what was happening to her nephew. As she gasped in horror, she wasn’t paying attention to her surroundings, and so didn’t notice the figure creeping up behind her until the sound of a spell being spoken penetrated her whirling mind.

“ Crucio!”

Heather let out a loud scream as the pain curse hit her in the back. She quickly collapsed to the ground, writhing in agony. It was short lived, though, as her tormentor lifted the curse and began to laugh at her.

“ Well, well, well, I see the Mudblood whore is on her back again, where she belongs,” the silky voice drawled. Heather looked up at her attacker, fear visible in her eyes.

“ Lucius,” she whispered, dread filling her.

“ Nice to see you again, Evans. I think my Lord will be pleased to see who I have captured. He might even let me ‘play’ with you as a reward,” the Malfoy patriarch drawled.

“ That’s not going to happen, Lucius, I won’t let it,” another voice called from behind the blond man. Lucius and Heather both turned to look in the direction of the newcomer, both shocked to see who it was.

“ Draco,” Lucius spat.

“ Lucius,” Draco greeted with a sneer, “ I would say it was a pleasure to see you again, but that would be a lie.”

“ What are you doing here?” Heather hissed, afraid for her young friend. As far as she knew, he had decided to remain neutral in the war, avoiding the battles, as they would force him to choose sides. The young blond merely smiled back at her.

“ I couldn’t let the only family I have get killed now, could I?” he told her with a smirk, before sending a dark curse at his father. As the pair began to duel, Heather gathered her wits, and before long they had Lucius Malfoy unconscious and bound on the ground. They were about to move away from him when a voice came from off to one side.

“ Expelliamus!”

Draco’s wand went flying and the pair looked over to the newcomer, Heather growling in recognition.

“ Caligula, I never thought I’d see *you* again,” she spat.

“ Well, I’m just full of surprises,” he replied with a malicious grin. As he spoke to Heather, he didn’t notice Draco waving his hand slightly. The next thing he knew, Draco was pointing his summoned wand at his grandfather, yelling two fatal words.

“ Avada Kedavra!”

As the green light sped towards him, Caligula gaped at his grandson in shock. When the light impacted and Caligula Malfoy fell to the ground, dead, Heather looked at her young friend in surprise. Draco simply shrugged.

“ I was brought up in a Death Eater household, I was taught that spell years ago. I just never thought I’d be using it on my own family.”

Heather gawped at him.

“ Draco, you just killed someone...” she whispered.

“ I know, but as Dumbledore keeps telling people, this is war, and we have to do everything we can to win. If I have a choice between killing and being killed, I’ll choose the former every time. Death Eaters are tricky things. If you stun them, they’re out for a while, but

if they get up again, they won't hesitate in killing you. You have to make sure they don't get up again."

Heather nodded in agreement, before looking back over to where Harry had fallen. She could see the man who stabbed him fighting with another black robed figure. Behind the group, Ginny, Hermione, Ron and Glenadade were heading in their direction. With a shrug, Heather went to join them, cursing enemies as she went. Ron would need to heal Harry, if he could, and as many friends as possible needed to be there to keep the enemies away as he did so. After all, they needed Harry to defeat Voldemort, and if he died, then all would be lost. As she made her way over, she saw Draco was coming with her. When she gave him an enquiring look, he shrugged lightly.

"I own Potter, and if he dies, at least I'll know I've tried to repay the debt."

Heather simply nodded and went back to the fight.

Four other people on the battlefield were quickly making their way over to Harry's side. Remus, Sirius and Eustace had been battling some of the evil vampires, who had broken away from the main group to attack the humans. As soon as they spotted Snape standing over Harry, their blood began to boil and they simultaneously growled one spell.

"Lumos Solem!"

The vampires in front of them all disintegrated as the sunlight touched them. The three men headed over to Harry, murder in their eyes, but were intercepted by a frantic Minh.

"What happened?" she said, grabbing her husband's arm, "Something's wrong with Harry, I can feel it."

"Harry's down," Eustace told her, "Severus stabbed him."

Minh gasped, tears filling her eyes.

"No, no, no," she muttered, "I can't lose him. I lost my son; I'm not losing my grandson, too."

Eustace pulled her into a quick hug, pulling away abruptly to curse an incoming Death Eater. Taking his wife's hand, he started making his way over to the centre of the fight, Sirius and Remus right behind him.

One other close friend of Harry's saw the Boy-Who-Lived fall to the ground. With a growl, he sprinted across the battlefield and came to a halt behind Harry's attacker. With a growl, he addressed the man.

"Hello, Father."

The Death Eater swiveled around and grinned at the newcomer.

"Severus! Son, come bask with me in the glory that is before us. After plaguing our Master for fifty years, the boy is finally defeated."

Severus let out a loud growl, and settled into a fighting stance.

"Father, you will not get away with this. Harry will live, and he will defeat Voldemort. You, however, will not be there to see it."

Satanus Snape looked at his son in astonishment, not having expected this turn of events. After all, as far as he knew, Severus was as loyal to his Master as he was. That didn't appear to be the case, though, and with a snarl of anger, he drew his wand on his son.

"Traitor!" he spat, before throwing a curse at Severus. The younger Snape, though, waved his hand and deflected it. With a smirk, the Potions Master leapt into the duel with gusto, using wandless magic to protect himself and curse his father as much as possible. The elder Snape was shocked at his son's powers, giving him a disbelieving look when he didn't use his wand at all. Eventually, Sev caught sight of people approaching from all sides, the time travellers, several generations of Marauders, Heather and Draco. It was time to finish the fight. When Satanus sent the Killing curse at his son, and nothing happened, the older man stopped his attack and gaped at his son.

"S-Severus!" he stuttered, "Impossible!"

“ Perfectly possible, Father,” Severus sneered, pulling out one of the engraved throwing knives Harry had once gifted him with and hurling at the man in front of him. The dagger lodged itself in Satanus’ ribcage, and the man gave his son a hateful and disbelieving look before collapsing to the ground, a pool of blood forming around him. Severus shot the body a hateful look before kneeling next to Harry’s body and turning him over. The Boy-Who-Lived was deathly pale, having lost a lot of blood, and was barely breathing. Thinking quickly, Severus pulled the dagger out of Harry’s back and watched as more blood seeped out of the wound. Knowing the fact that Harry was part vampire was the only thing keeping the boy alive; Sev took up the dagger in his hand and slashed his wrist, holding the wound over Harry’s mouth.

When the other people arrived, Sirius immediately went to launch himself at Severus, still thinking him to be the one who hurt his godson. Remus, though, noted the body of the Snape patriarch lying close by, and put two and two together.

“ Sirius, it wasn’t Severus,” he told the irate animagus.

“ What do you mean, we saw him!” Sirius snarled.

“ He’s right, it wasn’t Sev, it was Satanus,” Hermione interjected. Sirius looked to the body of the floor and relaxed a little. He was soon pulled out of this state, though, when curses were rapidly hurled his way. The others all quickly formed a wall around Harry, Severus and Ron. As the Death Eaters around them concentrated their attack on the cluster of Order members, those in the centre of the circle were well protected as Severus and Ron did all they could to get Harry healed. Ron placed his hands on his best friend’s chest, healing the damage done by the dagger as fast as he could. Sev was still feeding Harry his blood, watching with relief as the injured boy started to regain some colour in his skin. Harry was naturally pale, being a vampire, but not as deathly pale as he had been when the group arrived. With the infusion of new blood, his vampire healing also took some of the strain from Ron. Before long, the Boy-Who-Lived started to stir and opened his eyes, blinking up at the figures above him.

“ What’s going on?” he asked in confusion.

“ You were stabbed by my father,” Severus told him. Harry’s eyes widened.

“ How’s the battle going?” he asked. Ron looked around, a grim look on his face.

“ Voldemort’s being kept busy by Dumbledore, and I suppose the Death Eaters and Order members are about evenly matched. We really need to take down the Dark Lord, as it’ll scatter the dark forces.”

Harry thought for a few seconds, a small frown marring his forehead, before he looked up at his two friends.

“ I have an idea.”

Ten minutes later, after defeating all of the Death Eaters attacking their little group, the friends made their way towards the Hogwarts lake, where Voldemort and Dumbledore were battling earnestly. The headmaster seemed to be holding his own, but it was apparent that he was starting to tire. Voldemort, on the other hand, was still going strong. As the party neared, Harry concentrated hard; severing his mental link with the rest of the Order, after telling them what he wanted them to do. Harry’s mental coordination of battles was always successful in making the side of the Light more organised, but in this instance, Harry needed as few distractions as possible. After all, this was the decisive battle, and it was finally time for him to take Voldemort out. As soon as Harry severed the links with the Order, he strengthened the ones he had with Hermione, Ron and Ginny. They would be needed if he was to pull off his latest plan. Just before they reached the duelling duo, Harry stopped everyone.

“ Ok, this is it,” he said, “ I’m going to take down the Head Snake, but I need you all to keep the rest of the Death Eaters away from me. I can’t have them distracting me while I’m fighting him. It’s going to be hard enough as it is. Use any means necessary. I mean anything. Dark magic, Light magic, Wand or Wandless, animagus forms or weapons. I need you to keep them all at bay. Can you do that?”

Everyone nodded their heads. They knew what they had to do, and they would protect Harry with their lives. Even Draco wasn't complaining. As the others started to form a loose perimeter around the area, Ron, Ginny and Hermione took up strategic places in a triangle shape. Harry closed his eyes briefly, trusting the others to keep him safe, and accessed the part of his mind which knew how to speak parseltongue. With a mental nudge, he accessed the other three's minds, and fed them the information they needed. Immediately, Ron, Ginny and Hermione began to chant in the snake language, raising their hands to either side, forming a triangular wall of energy, shutting out the elderly headmaster, and locking Harry in with his arch nemesis.

As soon as Voldemort realised he was surrounded, he looked over at the boy at the edge of the wall, glaring hatefully at him. Harry looked a little ruffled, and had caked blood staining his front, but his eyes were determined.

"Hello, Tom," he said, "Long time no see."

"Potter," Voldemort spat, his eyes narrowing, "Or is it Evans?"

In response, Harry sent a wave of pain through the bald man's Dark Mark, causing him to grip his arm in agony.

"I see you figured it out, Tom," Harry stated.

"You have plagued me for fifty years, Potter," Voldemort snarled, "And finally, I will rid the world of you once and for all. This time, you will not get the better of me."

"Really, Tom, I thought you would know better than that by now," Harry smirked, "After all, every other time we've met, I've given you a sound thrashing. You and your little pet Death Eaters have been defeated every time. What makes you think this time will be any different?"

"Because, Potter, I've learned a few things over the years, several of which I learned from you. I'm prepared for you this time."

“ That will remain to be seen,” Harry said, settling into a fighting stance. Glancing quickly outside the barrier, he saw his friends and family fighting for their lives, and the lives of everyone in the wizarding world. As he watched, Severus hacked and slashed with his sword before turning into his animagus form, the velociraptor a perfect weapon. He felt pride washing through him when he saw what a great warrior his friend became. That pride only grew as he saw his son change forms as well, into a beautiful golden lion. Focusing back on the Dark Lord, he started to hurl spells at him. Voldemort retaliated, although the fact that he needed a wand and incantations slowed him down somewhat. The shimmering shield around the combatants protected those outside from any stray spells, being strong enough to withstand the Unforgivables with ease.

The duel continued for a while, Voldemort quickly giving up on the Killing curse when he realised it was having no effect whatsoever. Instead, he started chanting quietly in parseltongue, summoning a large ball of energy in one hand. Harry was too busy keeping up his attack to notice until it was too late. With a roar, Voldemort threw the ball of magic at his opponent. Harry fell to the ground with the force of the impact, and felt a tingling all over as the spell went to work. With dawning horror, he realised what his opponent had done to him.

“ Where did you get that spell?” he demanded as he regained his breath. Voldemort was standing over him now, his arms crossed as he savoured the moment of his victory.

“ The same place I got the incantation for the Dark Mark,” he said with a grin, “ I have a very long memory, Potter, I remember things like this. I have been waiting for years to try this spell out on you, and I finally have my wish.”

Harry, shaking his head in denial, lifted his hand towards the red eyed man and whispered a stunning spell. Much to his dismay, nothing happened. He tried again, and every time had the same result, but the volume of the Dark Lord's laugh increased. With a snarl, Harry did the only thing he could. With his magic drained from him he had only his physical skills to fall back on. He could feel himself becoming weaker, though he didn't know why, and knew that if he



was going to act, it would have to be quickly. Leaping to his feet, he drew his sword and attacked the cackling figure. Voldemort, unprepared for the sudden physical attack, quickly summoned a sword of his own and started to fight back. While he was not as skilled as Harry in the art of sword fighting, what he lacked in technique he made up for with magic. All the time, he still continued to hit Harry with pain and cutting curses. Before long, Harry was weakening further, blood loss so soon after his last major injury not doing him any good. With a last lunge, Harry buried his sword deep into his enemy's shoulder. Riddle roared in pain and shoved the green eyed boy to the ground once more. Pulling out the sword embedded in his flesh, he leveled his wand at Harry and muttered one final curse.

“ Animus annihilare!”

As the ray of purple light headed for Harry, he felt himself weaken further. Just as unconsciousness took him, the last thing he heard was an unearthly scream.

## Chapter Twenty Seven – Aftermath

The first sound Harry was aware of when he started to regain consciousness was the frantic conversation of the Hogwarts teachers. As he blearily opened his eyes and looked around the Hogwarts infirmary, he noticed all of the staff gathered at one end of the hospital wing, a worried looking Poppy Pomfrey whispering furiously to them. Looking more closely, he noticed Ron and Hermione were there as well, listening to what the Mediwitch had to say with rapt attention. Blinking slowly and waiting for his blurred vision to clear further, Harry furiously tried to remember what had happened to land him in the infirmary once more. After mentally going over the last events he could remember, he suddenly sat up in shock as he realised what had happened. His sudden movement sent a flare of pain through his body, and his loud groan of protest alerted the other occupants to his condition. Ginny and Glen, who had been napping in the chairs at either side of Harry's bed, also woke with a jerk. Harry himself flopped back down on the hard mattress, moaning as pain coursed through his system.

“ Harry!” Hermione called as she reached his bedside, “ You're awake! How do you feel?”

The green eyed boy sent her a poisonous glare at the question, and the girl coloured in embarrassment.

“ Alright, stupid question,” she conceded, “ Where does it hurt?”

“ Everywhere,” he groaned, and Ginny quickly took his hand in hers. He gave his girlfriend's hand a light squeeze before asking the obvious question.

“ What happened?”

There was an uncomfortable silence as the others shot each other conspiratorial looks. Harry began to frown at their actions, realising they were deciding what not to tell him.

“ I want to know everything,” he said in a voice that brooked no argument, “ If something's happened, I don't want you to keep it from me. I need to know. What happened to Voldemort?”

That was the first thing that leapt to mind for the Boy-Who-Lived. After all, the last thing he remembered was the Dark Lord hitting him with a rather nasty looking spell. What happened after that was a complete mystery.

“ We’re not sure,” Ginny told him.

“ What do you mean, you’re not sure?” Harry bellowed, distraught, “ That was supposed to be the final battle. Did he escape or didn’t he?”

“ As far as we can tell, he’s gone,” Severus told him. Harry closed his eyes and rubbed his forehead where a headache was starting to develop. It seemed like none of his friends were willing to give him a straight answer.

“ Just tell me what happened after I passed out. The last thing I remember was him casting a spell, then everything went black. What was the spell he cast?”

“ It is called ‘animus annihilare’, a Dark Art of the foulest nature, which destroys the soul,” Minerva told him, “ It is very potent, and very difficult to cast. We believe You-Know-Who only used it as a last resort, seeing as the Killing curse wasn’t working on you.”

“ Well, I’m obviously not soulless,” the boy replied, scathingly, “ So what went wrong?”

“ It backfired,” Ron explained, “ It hit you after you fell to the ground, then the colour intensified and it sort of bounced off of you and hit Voldemort. We couldn’t really see what happened next because there was a bright flash of light, but when it was over, we dropped the shield and went to see if you were all right. Where Voldemort was, all we found was a pile of ash.”

Harry contemplated this for a minute before it suddenly dawned on him what had happened. The others watched perplexed as a brilliant smile spread across his face and he began to laugh heartily. Several minutes later, he finally regained control of himself, and his eyes, sparkling with mirth, met each of their gazes one by one. His friends and family immediately saw something they had never seen in the

green eyed boy. His features were no longer tense, and the fear and hopelessness that had been mirrored in his eyes was gone. In the place of a depressed and weary man was a carefree teenager who looked genuinely happy.

“ Harry?” Ginny asked tentatively, “ Are you alright?”

Harry grinned at his girlfriend and pulled her in for a passionate kiss, which left Ginny breathless, and most of the teachers embarrassed.

“ I’ve never felt better in my life, Gin,” he said, “ For the first time in my life, I am no longer shadowed by Voldemort. He’s gone, he’s really gone! I did what everyone wanted me to do, and now I’m free.”

“ But how do you know he’s gone,” Glen asked.

“ Because the spell rebounded on him. You said it yourself, it was a potent Dark Arts spell to destroy the soul. It was aimed at me, but bounced back and destroyed Voldemort’s soul. He won’t be coming back.”

“ I don’t get it,” Sirius said, looking at his godson in confusion. Harry smiled and looked at the Potions Master.

“ Sev, can I see your left arm, please?”

Severus, a little warily, pulled up his sleeve and bared his arm, where the Dark Mark still marred the skin. Harry smiled, and looked at the others, who were watching him in consternation. They were obviously waiting for him to explain himself. However, Harry noticed dawning comprehension on several faces. For the benefit of those who didn’t understand, he explained himself.

“ I control the Dark Marks, as many of you will know. I gave Voldemort his Mark, and he gave them to his followers. I, however, controlled them all, as I was the one to create the original Mark on Tom Riddle’s arm. One of the little known properties of this kind of binding magic, is that anyone who possesses a Dark Mark cannot kill the one who put it there. That is how I survived as a baby. I transferred some of the control to Lily Evans’ womb when I was in 1976, thus giving any offspring she had the protection from Voldemort

the control allowed. As a result, the Killing curse bounced off of me and destroyed Voldemort's body."

" And this time the same thing happened," Hermione said. Harry nodded to her.

" Exactly. The soul destroying spell would have killed me, but because Voldemort carried the Mark he was unable to do so. The spell backfired and destroyed him instead."

Harry leaned back against his pillows in silence as everyone assimilated this piece of information. As the news began to sink in, smiles spread across every face. Sirius started to cheer, which made everyone else join in enthusiastically. Even the usually dour Potions Master had a rare grin on his face. After a few minutes, Harry cleared his throat and regained everyone's attention.

" So, what happened to *me*?" he asked, thinking of the power draining spell Voldemort had used on him. This, apparently, was not the best topic to mention, as everyone's face fell at the question.

" Well..." Ron began, nervously.

" What is it?" the saviour asked, sternly, " Whatever it is, I want to hear it. Don't keep it from me."

Poppy cleared her throat, gaining Harry's attention.

" Harry, dear, I'm afraid the news isn't too good. As you know, the spell You-Know-Who used on you drained your power. Now, normally there would be no serious side effects, just a loss of the ability to perform magic for a period of time. You, however, are not a normal wizard."

" What are you trying to tell me?" Harry asked, dread filling him. He knew something had gone wrong on the battlefield, and now he realised he felt a lot weaker, and in a lot more pain, than he should do. His vampiric healing should have helped...

" It's my vampirism, isn't it?" he gasped in realisation.

“ Partly,” Ginny explained, “ But also because of your elven heritage. Humans, magical and Muggle alike, have some innate magic, but it doesn’t really affect their biology too drastically. Wizards have more magic in them than Muggles, meaning then can use it to perform spells, but a loss of magic doesn’t hurt them on a cellular level. Elves and vampires, though, are magical beings...”

“ Meaning, they have strong innate magic, just like humans, but it is embedded in their genetic makeup,” Hermione concluded.

Harry sat still for a few minutes, absorbing the information he had been given.

“ Are you telling me,” he whispered eventually, “ That elves and vampires need magic to survive?”

“ Yes,” Sirius confirmed. Harry closed his eyes in shock, realising the full implications of this discovery. Elves and vampires were very magical creatures, with their innate magic playing a vital role in their biology. Without it, their bodies would begin to fail, and they would eventually die.

“ So, I’m dying,” he stated resignedly. Ginny grasped his hand hard, and Glen laid his hand on his father’s arm.

“ I’m afraid so,” Poppy said, her head lowered in resignation, “ At least as far as we can tell. Are you feeling pain?”

“ All over, sharp and continuous,” he replied.

“ Your cells are starting to break down. Your vampire healing is still working to some extent, but it can only do so much. Your elven cells are breaking down the quickest. We estimate you have maybe three days left.”

“ How long was I unconscious?” Harry asked resignedly.

“ Just over day,” Ginny told him, tears now falling from her eyes. The young hero pulled her to him and embraced her as she sobbed. He knew he had to stay strong, for her sake. Looking at his son, he saw the grief on the other boy’s face. He had only just begun to know his

father, and now he would be taken away from him. A burst of anger flooded through Harry as he saw the hopelessness in his friends' eyes.

" Well, if I only have three days, we'd better get started," Harry growled.

" With what?" Sev asked.

" With finding a solution. I don't know about you, but I've been through too much to just lie down and accept a slow and painful death."

" But there's nothing we can do!" Glen yelled.

" I refuse to believe that," Harry snapped, " There is a solution to every problem, it's just a matter of finding it."

" You don't have time!" Hermione grated out, " You only have three days! You'd be better off spending them with your friends and family than looking for something that can't be found! Harry, I love you like a brother, and the last thing in the world I want is for you to die, but there isn't a solution. We can't pull off a miracle this time! Deep down, you know that too. I've looked! I spent the last day in the library with anyone not tending to the injured, and there is nothing there! *Nothing!*"

The girl, her piece said, collapsed onto the floor, sobbing. Ron, upset himself, knelt next to her and wrapped his arms around her in comfort. Harry felt ashamed for making his friend cry. Deep down, though, he wasn't giving up. Not now, after the life he had had. All he ever wanted was the threat of Voldemort gone so he could settle down with the woman he loved and live his life in peace. Now that his dream had been snatched away from him, he was seething inside. Deciding to drop the subject for now, he looked around the infirmary and noticed the beds full of battle victims. With a start, he realised he hadn't even bothered to find out how everyone else was. He turned to a watching Sev, asking him what was on his mind.

" How did the battle go for everyone else? Who did we lose?"

The Potions Master paled at the question, but answered nonetheless.

“ More than we hoped, but it could have been a lot worse than it was. From the Aurors, we lost Mad Eye Moody, Joseph Abbot, Alistair Bones, and Electra McKinnon. Prominent Order members lost include Mundungus Fletcher and Amos Diggory. Fudge was killed not long after he arrived.”

“ What about the Death Eaters? Did we get many of the inner circle members?”

“ Lucius and Caligula Malfoy, my father Satanus, Nott, Avery, Bellatrix Lestrangle and Robert Black are the most notable. The Dark vampires were defeated, as were the Dementors and werewolves.”

“ That’s good,” Harry said in relief. He had been worried that one of the most prominent of the inner circle would try to take over Voldemort’s position as leader. With the worst of the Death Eaters out of the way, anyone who escaped would be disorganised and unlikely to put up much resistance.

“ Harry. There’s something you should know,” Sev said, choking a little. Harry was immediately concerned. Anything that could upset his stoic friend had to be bad.

“ What is it, Sev?”

A tear slipped from the older man’s eye as he gave his mentor the news.

“ Dumbledore’s dying.”



## Chapter Twenty Eight – Solutions

### *Dumbledore's dying*

The words floated around Harry's numb brain, but they lost their meaning in the maelstrom of emotions the boy was feeling.

### *Dumbledore's dying*

Words Harry had dreaded subconsciously for the last eight years, knowing that one day, his guide and mentor would be gone.

### *Dumbledore's dying*

The numbness travelled throughout Harry's body, dulling the pain and sweeping away the exhaustion.

### *Dumbledore's dying*

A phrase Harry would hear echoing in his mind for the rest of his life. If the great Albus Dumbledore was dying, then he had no chance. With the elderly wizard gone, Harry would no longer have his disapproval of the Dark Arts – something that had no doubt kept him in line for many years. Life would never be the same, but then, if life was only three days, what did it matter?

Severus stood to one side, silently observing the play of emotions across his young friend's face. The last he saw, though, was defeated resignation, and the Potions Master immediately became angry, knowing what Harry was thinking.

"You can't give up now," he grated, startling the boy out of his thoughts.

"Why not?" Harry whispered.

"Because I believe in you. I believe that if you want to fight this thing, you can. You just have to believe in yourself."

"I can't!" Harry shouted, gaining everyone's attention, "Without Dumbledore to keep me in line, I would lose myself!"

“ Do you think he is the only person keeping you straight?” Severus asked him incredulously.

“ His disapproval of the magic I use has made sure I don’t turn evil! Without him here, I’ll slip again, and next time it will be too late for me!”

“ Have you so little faith in your friends?” Severus asked, shocked. Harry lowered his eyes in shame.

“ It’s not that I don’t have faith in my friends, Sev,” he muttered, “ I just don’t have faith in myself. I’ve been going down the path to true darkness for years, and without Dumbledore here, who will pull me back?”

A single tear rolled down Harry’s cheek, and Severus uncharacteristically pulled the boy into his arms and embraced him. The other occupants of the room watched in fascination as their saviour finally broke down, the pressure of the revelations washing away as he clung to his Slytherin friend and sobbed. When he finally calmed down, Harry looked at Minerva and smiled sadly.

“ I want to see him.”

“ Harry...” she started, but the look in his eyes silenced her. She nodded her head, and pulled back the curtain around the bed next to Harry’s. In it lay Albus Dumbledore, looking pale and sickly. For once, he looked his age. His eyes were closed and his breathing was shallow. He looked bad, and Harry turned away after a moment, too upset to look any more.

“ What happened?” he asked, “ The last time I saw him he had been holding his own against Voldemort. When I got him out of the fight, I thought he’d be alright!”

“ He was exhausted from fighting the Dark Lord,” Hermione said, sadly, “ He’s not as young as he used to be, and as soon as you took over the fight with Voldemort, he collapsed. One of the Death Eaters hit him with several curses, the results of which have injured him beyond healing.”

Harry closed his eyes as a wave of sadness and emotional pain filled him. Dumbledore was like a grandfather to him. He was a mentor, a trusted ally, and a friend. He had been a rock for the boy, someone who could be relied upon no matter what. Most people in 1943 would have condemned the time travellers, or at least turned them away as lunatics. Albus, though, had believed them, and most of all, believed *in* them. Despite his disapproval of Harry using the Dark Arts, he allowed it, showing how much trust he placed in the young saviour. Now that he may no longer be there to support Harry, the Boy-Who-Lived didn't know what he would do.

As the physical pain of his condition flared up and Harry once more fell into unconsciousness, a silent tear streaked down his cheek.

The next two days were longest days of the time travellers' lives, and also the shortest. They spent the time they had researching ways of curing Harry, even calling in Lolide and Vrykolakas for advice and solutions their people may be able to provide. Harry drifted in and out of consciousness, the constant pain he was in worsening as the hours dragged on. No matter what the group tried, there was nothing they could do for the saviour of the wizarding world.

In the rest of the country, there were celebrations in every wizarding settlement. It was just like the last time Voldemort had been defeated, with parties in the streets and the Obliviators working overtime with the amount of sightings of magic by Muggles. Everyone was happy, though, and didn't care what trouble they were causing. Harry Potter had done it again, that which no-one else could do. He had defeated the Dark Lord Voldemort, and brought safety and freedom to the wizarding world. Little did the people know that their saviour was dying.

The Ministry of Magic was in chaos. The Aurors who had survived the battle were telling everyone about Voldemort's resurrection. Stories of the battle were rife, spreading like wildfire amongst those who had not witnessed it. The loss of Cornelius Fudge was also celebrated by many, but the power vacuum was causing some trouble. The most senior Ministry officials had taken it upon themselves to call an election to choose a new Minister. The

overall air of the government was excited, relieved, and more than a little disrupted, but nobody was complaining.

Hogwarts saw an extension of the celebrations. Every House had run amok, throwing wild parties and swapping stories, yet also mourning for their members lost in the battle. The teachers had cancelled classes until further notice while they tended to the injured and compensated as best they could for the loss of the headmaster. Minerva had taken over as headmistress, but was too preoccupied with Harry and Albus' conditions to deal with the students.

As the eve of 8th May came, everyone was losing hope of finding a cure for Harry. His condition had worsened earlier in the evening, and Poppy was sure he would be dead the next day. The rest of the time travellers had been ordered out of the hospital wing when Harry fell unconscious once more, as the Mediwitch insisted they needed sleep. When Ginny and Glen told her they wouldn't sleep until it was over, the wily witch slipped some Dreamless Sleep potion into their tea, taking the decision out of their hands.

When Harry awoke in the middle of the night, he looked blearily around him and found the infirmary free of any visitors. The stillness of the night air was disturbed only by the rasping breaths of the elderly wizard in the next bed. Harry gritted his teeth through the pain and turned his head to the right and looked at the headmaster. Over the last two days he had watched the other man become increasingly weak. He hadn't woken up, which broke Harry's heart. He had so wanted to speak with his mentor before their lives ended.

As Harry closed his eyes against the pain he was in, he listened to Dumbledore breathing. It soothed him, and he soon began to drift off to sleep once more. The sudden cessation of the background noise quickly brought Harry back to a state of alertness. Silent tears began to fall from his closed eyes as he realised that Dumbledore was gone. A soft chuckle startled him immensely.

"Now, Harry, there's no need for that, my boy."

Harry's eyes shot open at the familiar voice and he looked wildly over in its direction. His eyes widened in shock as he saw a transparent

figure standing next to his bed. It let off a soft blue glow, and as Harry looked up into the figure's face, he was met by a pair of familiar twinkling blue eyes.

"Professor!" Harry gasped.

"Yes, Harry, it is I. Don't be afraid."

Tears poured freely down Harry's face now, and he began to softly sob. Dumbledore placed a transparent arm around the boy and pulled him into a hug. The green eyed boy buried his face in the soft creases of the ethereal robes and cried until he had no tears left. When he had calmed down, he looked up at his friend and mentor.

"How?" he asked.

"Ah, well, you see Harry, the ones we love never leave us. Especially not when we are in need of help," Albus said with a smile.

"But...I'm beyond help," Harry sniffed, "I'm going to die too, and there's nothing anyone can do about it."

"Are you sure about that?" Dumbledore asked. Harry thought long and hard, before nodding his head resignedly.

"We've looked everywhere for a cure, and there isn't one. I need magic in my cells to allow them to heal. They've nearly completely broken down, I can feel it. Madame Pomfrey doesn't think my natural magic will start to return for another week, which will be too late."

"Nothing is ever too late, my boy. Every problem has a solution; it's just a matter of finding it."

"Well, what would *you* suggest?" Harry asked. Dumbledore just smiled at him and began to fade. The younger man began to panic, increasing his grip on the headmaster's robes, but to no avail. The figure became a glowing ball of soft, blue light, which suddenly slammed into Harry's chest and began to spread throughout his

body. The last thing Harry heard as the darkness claimed him were Dumbledore's words.

*Every problem has a solution; it's just a matter of finding it.*

When Harry woke up the next morning, the first thing he noticed was that the pain that had been a constant part of his life for the last three days, was gone. When he tried to move, though, he felt a wave of dizziness pass over him, and both of his hands were grasped tightly. Opening his eyes, he saw Glen on one side and Ginny on the other, both with silent tears coursing down their faces. Thinking back to the night before, Harry tilted his head to the right and saw the empty bed next to his. A wave of sorrow passed over him and his own tears began to fall.

*Don't cry, Harry, he heard echoing in his mind, All things come into this world, and pass out of it once more. I am no different. Do not be sad, young one, for the ones we love never leave us.*

The familiar words from the night before brought a smile to Harry's face, and he let out a light chuckle. The others in the room, including all of his friends and family, gave him a strange look, and shot each other glances of concern.

"Harry, don't strain yourself," Ginny whimpered, "You'll weaken your body, and we'll lose you quicker."

"Just lie still, Dad. Are you in any pain?" Glen asked.

Harry looked at them quizzically, before realising that today was the day Madame Pomfrey had predicted his body would fail. While he didn't know what Dumbledore had done the night before, he could feel in his body that it was slowly healing. He was still very weak, but he was no longer dying. Looking at the Mediwitch who was hovering off to one side of the group, he motioned her to come over with a shake of his head.

"Madame Pomfrey, would you please scan me and tell the others the progress of my...condition?" he asked, a slight smile playing on his lips. Everyone thought he had lost his mind, wondering why he was smiling at a time like this.

“ If you’re sure, Harry dear,” she said, waving her wand over him and assessing the damage done to his body. When she let out a sharp gasp of surprise, Harry laughed lightly, the horror and shock of the last few days finally leaving him fully.

“ He’s...he’s...” Poppy gasped, unable to say the words.

“ What is it, Poppy?” Sirius asked.

“ He’s...fine!”

“ Fine?” everyone yelled in alarm. Poppy performed the tests a second, third and fourth time, but kept getting the same results.

“ There’s nothing wrong with him. Most of his cells have healed nicely, and I’m guessing the pain has gone. I...I don’t understand!” she wailed, throwing her arms up in the air. Everyone looked at a smiling Harry in shock and relief, before each of his friends and family took it in turn to pull him into a hug. Once the rounds had been done, they retook their seats and looked at him expectantly, waiting for an explanation. Harry grinned back at them.

“ Every problem has a solution; it’s just a matter of finding it,” he said, closing his eyes and falling back asleep.

The next time Harry woke up, there were fewer people in the room. Ginny was still by his side, as were Glen and Sirius, but it appeared everyone else had more important things to do than stay in the infirmary. As his head cleared, he let out a loud groan, gaining him the attention of his family. Ginny gave him a tight hug, a broad smile on her face, and Sirius grinned at him widely. Glen took his hand and gave it a light squeeze.

*It’s always nice to see a friendly face when waking up from an illness or injury, the familiar voice in Harry’s mind commented, They always bring a selection of sweets to guide you on the path to health.*

The other three gave Harry strange looks when he suddenly started laughing. Once he had calmed down, he thought it best to explain himself. However, there was nothing to stop him from having a bit of fun first.

“ Sorry about that,” he said with a hiccough, “ The voices in my head are playing up again.”

The looks on the others’ faces was priceless, causing Harry to laugh even harder. He could hear an echo or mirth resonating inside his skull, and was comforted that death hadn’t jaded the headmaster’s sense of humour.

“ The...looks...on...your...faces!” he gasped out.

“ Well, what do you expect!” Sirius yelped, flustered, “ You just told us you were hearing voices!”

“ I know, I know,” Harry said, thinking of Ron and Hermione, “ Even in the wizarding world, hearing voices isn’t a good sign. Don’t worry, though, it’s only Professor Dumbledore.”

The others immediately fell silent, no longer finding the conversation amusing.

“ Harry...” Ginny said, gently, “ Dumbledore’s dead. Don’t you remember? He was gone when you woke up earlier.”

“ I know, Gin,” Harry reassured her, “ I’m not losing my mind.”

He decided the best thing to do would be to explain what had happened the night before, giving them a decent explanation for his improving health. When he was finished, Glen and Ginny had bemused looks on their faces, but Sirius looked relieved and a little awed.

“ But Dad,” Glen said, “ If that’s true, then how are you healed?”

“ It was Dumbledore’s spirit,” Sirius explained, “ When we die, our spirit leaves our body and moves on. Sometimes, the spirit stays in the mortal realm, in the form of a ghost. Now, the spirit, while not powerful like the wizard was in life, still retains some of the person’s magic. Without it, we wouldn’t have ghosts. What I believe Dumbledore did when he died was to possess Harry.”

“ Harry’s possessed!” Ginny yelled, shocked.



“ It’s not a bad thing, Ginny, in fact, it’s what’s keeping him alive.”

“ My cells,” Harry concluded, “ They need magic to live, and I didn’t have any. When Professor Dumbledore died, he came for a little holiday in my body until my magic could restore itself, using the magic left in his spirit form to allow my cells to heal.”

“ That’s ingenious!” Glen stated, a smile on his face.

“ I know,” Harry said, giving his son a hug.

Mentally, Harry was searching out the other soul inhabiting his body, and sent feeling of gratitude towards it.

*You’re quite welcome, my boy,* the unearthly voice replied as Harry spent some time catching up with his friends.

Four days later, Harry was finally released from the hospital wing so that he could attend Dumbledore’s funeral. It had been just over a week since the final battle, and the wizarding world had finally settled down somewhat. The shock of Dumbledore’s death had shaken the wizarding population almost as much as the end of the Dark Lord. His funeral would mark the end of an important era in magical history. The dark reign of terror had come to an end, one of the country’s greatest and most revered wizards was dead, and the Ministry was undergoing significant changes under the newly elected Minister, Aberforth Dumbledore. The deceased headmaster’s brother had been a surprising candidate, but he was proving to be a capable leader.

Harry felt a wave of sadness fill him every time he thought of his mentor. While the wily old wizard was still with him in the most intimate way possible, encased in Harry’s body, it wasn’t the same as having his reassuring presence there in the flesh. The day of Dumbledore’s death had been officially declared a public day of mourning, and the wizarding world was perfectly willing to show its respect. After all, Albus Dumbledore had not only seen to the downfall of Voldemort, but had also eliminated the threat of Grindelwald.

The ceremony was very private, and was held on the Hogwarts grounds. The mourners were restricted to members of the Dumbledore family, and members of the Order of the Phoenix. On the front row of seats sat Aberforth, Harry, Ginny, Ron, Hermione, several generations of Marauders, the elves and Severus. The Order council was placed in the seats behind them, until the least prominent Order members were at the back. Hagrid, as usual, was sobbing loudly, causing quite a disruption.

As the ceremony in the Great Hall started, everyone stood up and sang one of Albus' requests, 'Puff the Magic Dragon'. Aberforth, as the former headmaster's closest living relative, took the podium first and addressed the crowd.

"Ladies, Gentlemen, as many of you will know, I am not as good with words as my late brother, but I have a few things I would like to say. Albus was a man of strength, honour and integrity. A man well loved by everyone whose lives he touched, simply by being himself. Many people over the years have thought him mad, or at the very least a little dotty, but underneath his multicoloured robes and Lemon Drops was a man who brought hope to a nation, a nation who without him would have fallen into Darkness. A nation who owes him a great debt. I am Aberforth Dumbledore, brother of Albus Dumbledore, and I am proud to call him family. Thank you."

As Aberforth stepped down, a great round of applause filled the Hall. Dumbledore had touched each of their lives in a personal way, so they each felt that Aberforth's words were true. As each person close to the headmaster stood to say a few words, the atmosphere at the funeral became increasingly emotional. Last, but not least, Harry took to podium, a slight lump in his throat.

"You all know me. I am Harry Potter, the one everyone claims in the saviour of the wizarding world. I am about to tell you otherwise."

There was a collective gasp as the crowd stared at Harry in shock. Inside his head, the Boy-Who-Lived felt Albus' soul shifting and expressing its curiosity.

“ I am here to tell you who the real saviour of the wizarding world is. That title belongs to none other than Albus Dumbledore.”

A ripple of whispering filled the crowd.

“ I know you all believe I have power. You all believe I used my magic and my wits to outmaneuver the great ‘Dark Lord’, but in reality I was little more than a pawn. A minor chess piece in the chessboard of life. Albus Dumbledore, however, was a king. Taking out a pawn does not affect the world in any profound way. There are many more like me; young, impulsive and enthusiastic people with the drive to achieve the impossible. I am not uncommon. Everyone has it within themselves to be a pawn, or a rook, or a knight. However, only a very rare few can be kings, without whom the game is ended. Albus Dumbledore was more than the headmaster of Hogwarts. He was more than the leader of the Order of the Phoenix. He was our king. The one who brought us all together to fight a common cause, and in the end, the battle was not lost unless he was checked. Now he has gone, and the game has ended. The battle is won, and the world is safe. Without him, it could not have been done, and I commend him. To Albus Dumbledore!” he said, bowing regally, tears trailing down his face as the crowd cheered.

*Well said, my boy, well said,* the voice of the man in question whispered in Harry’s mind as he stepped from the podium and retook his seat.

As the crowd settled down and the coffin was carried from the Great Hall, Harry, Minh, Lolide and Gaerwyn sang an elven funerary song, backed up by Fawkes. It differed slightly from the ones the time travellers and their friends had heard at other funerals, and as they all followed the casket onto the Hogwarts grounds, Ginny asked Harry about it. He gave her a watery smile as he finished the haunting melody.

“ It’s reserved for family,” he told her as Albus Dumbledore was finally laid to rest.

## Chapter Twenty Nine – The End of an Era

In the aftermath of Dumbledore's funeral, the Order members who were still in school suddenly realised that the exams were almost upon them. For the seventh years it was the NEWTs that were approaching much too quickly, especially for Harry, who was not only recuperating from the magic draining spell, but also trying to catch up on the work he had missed while in Azkaban. The few days he had had before the battle had been taken up with strategic planning rather than a backlog of essays. The students only had a month to prepare before the exams started, and for many of them it was simply not enough time.

The time travellers weren't as stressed out about the whole thing as many of the others, as they had already completed their NEWTs in the time of the founders, but they still wanted to do well, especially Hermione. To Glen, for whom these were important exams, the time seemed even more hectic. Although he had spent a lot of time in the modern age, there were still a lot of things he had to learn about twentieth century wizardry. If he was to perform well on his exams, he would have to make sure not to accidentally use ancient magics long lost to the wizarding world.

Aside from the chaos for the sixth and seventh years, life had returned almost to normal. The street parties had ended, the Ministry was undergoing a purge of the corrupt politicians, and the Aurors were rounding up the last of the Death Eaters. The Order of the Phoenix was now surplus to requirements, and had been as good as disbanded. Harry was planning on calling one more meeting before it officially broke up, which was planned for the day the school term ended.

Hogwarts life was almost back to normal, except for a few changes. While Minerva had been acting as Headmistress since Dumbledore was committed to St Mungo's, she had now officially taken up the post on a more permanent basis. Sirius was remaining as the Transfiguration teacher and Head of Gryffindor House. Heather, after several hours of discussion, had been persuaded by Minerva to stay on for several more years as the Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher. Since Minerva was now

Headmistress, she had appointed Severus the new Deputy Headmaster, a position he was thrilled to receive. Most of the students weren't happy with his change of status, but the man himself was just grateful that the former Gryffindor witch had trusted him enough to give him the job. After all, he had been a Death Eater, no matter how unwilling, for twenty years, and many people would not have readily trusted him as much as Dumbledore had done.

Since the downfall of Voldemort, Severus, Sirius, Remus and Harry had all shown a remarkable change in their outlooks on life. The Potions Master no longer openly favoured the Slytherins to the same degree, and he made an effort not to belittle the Gryffindors too much. It was as if all of his burdens had been lifted, and the cold hearted spy persona he had shown for so long had been shed. He was openly acting a lot more like the man Harry knew him to be. Sirius and Remus had also changed their attitudes to the outside world. Now that the threat of the Dark Lord was no longer shadowing their lives, they were a lot more carefree, and closer to the mischievous boys they had been as school. They were helping the Weasley twins more with their pranks, much to the disappointment of Minerva McGonagall, who was one of their main targets.

Harry had also lightened up now that the funeral was out of the way and he knew he wasn't going to die. The elation he had felt when he first woke up after the battle was back to some degree. He was free of the monster that had plagued him all of his life, and for the first time he no longer had a destiny. He didn't have a grand purpose to fulfill. He was free to get on with the rest of his life, but that thought frightened him more than anything else he had ever faced. Now that he had been given the choice of doing what he wished with the rest of his life, he didn't know what to do with the time he had been given. In all honesty, he had never expected to survive the final battle, despite his determination to live.

His immediate plans were simply to regain his strength and magic. While his natural magic had begun to return, allowing him to cast simple spells, he was still a long way from being at his best. While no longer needed, the spirit of the headmaster still remained inside of him; something the deceased wizard had said was just until all of Harry's magic returned. Albus, after all, didn't want the

Boy-Who-Lived to suffer a relapse, especially this close to the exams. After a mental discussion, the pair had decided to leave things as they were until Harry finished school, something Dumbledore had always wanted to see happen. After all, he had been a friend and mentor to the younger man for many years, and was proud he had made it as far as he had.

The furthest Harry had considered was the coming year. He knew his son needed to go home, and to do that he would have to use the amulet of time, as it was the only device anyone could think of that would send the boy that far into the past. Of course, Harry wouldn't let him go alone, and neither would the other three time travellers. They felt as if it was their duty to see the first of the Potters back to his own time. Thinking of the amulet brought Harry's mind back to his son's animagus form. It hadn't registered in his mind at the time, but during the battle he recalled seeing Glen turn into a lion. With a smile, Harry pictured the amulet in his mind's eye. An oval with four symbols at the compass points. A lightning bolt, a thestral, a phoenix and a unicorn. Each representing one on the original time travellers. In the centre, a roaring lion, a bold image of the son Harry had been blessed with meeting through the bizarre machinations of time and fate.

The second week of June finally arrived, and with it the start of the Hogwarts exams. The students from the Order had tried their best to catch up on any work they could, but for some it was simply an impossibility. The only ones who actually felt as if they were prepared were Harry and Hermione. As usual, they had been studying hard in their spare time for years, so knew most of the material ahead of the rest of their year. Harry, although he had missed a significant portion of the school year through running off to the Teutoburg forest, fighting Voldemort, and rotting in Azkaban, was feeling confident about the NEWTs. He knew he would never need the grades to get a job, as he had enough money in his vault from the quidditch royalties to live comfortably for several lifetimes, but nevertheless he wanted to do well for his pride if nothing else. He knew he had the ability to ace the exams, and wasn't prepared to do anything less. His magic had returned to full strength over the past four weeks, and he felt as if he wouldn't have any trouble casting the spells for the practical aspects of the tests.

As had happened the previous two years, Ron and Ginny were the least prepared for the NEWTs. They had, like the others, been revising madly for the last month, but it was simply too little too late. They knew they would get at least decent grades, as they still had the knowledge of the founders in their minds, however, their grasp of modern magical theory and History of Magic was spotty at best. Hermione, as usual, had prepared months in advance, and even during the preparations for the battles she had never failed to complete her homework. Glen, also, was well prepared, despite his disadvantages when it came to current magical ideas.

When the first exam rolled around, which just happened to be Potions, Ron let out a loud groan of protest.

“ I can’t believe they’re doing this to us! Potions, first exam on a Monday morning! They’re honestly sadistic!”

“ Ron, stop whining,” Hermione told him crossly.

“ I’m not whining!” he said, hotly, “ I just don’t see why they couldn’t have given us something nice, like Care of Magical Creatures, to ease us into the exams gently. This is just bloody cruel.”

“ Just think of it this way,” Harry pointed out, “ At least you will be able to say in two hour’s time that you never have to do potions again.”

“ Good point, mate,” Ron conceded, “ That’ll be a relief, I can tell you.”

“ I was thinking of studying for a Potions mastery, actually,” Harry told them. Hermione let out a loud squeal and wrapped her arms tightly around him.

“ Really? I’ve heard it’s really hard, but I know you can do it, Harry. You know more about potions than anyone, even Snape, and that’s saying something!”

“ Yeah, well, it’ll give me something to do, and if I’m going to study potions for years, I may as well have the title to go with it.”

“ You’re mad, mate,” Ron said with a chuckle, “ But it’s your life. I’ll support you all the way, you know I will.”

“ Me too,” Ginny said, wrapping her arms around his waist and giving him a kiss on the nose. Their conversation was broken up when Severus opened the door to his dungeon classroom and ushered them all inside.

Two weeks later it was all over. The exams had finished, and everyone in the school let out a huge sigh of relief. It had been a trying year for everyone, and the students were all glad it was over and done with. All they had left to do was relax until the end of term. For the seventh years it was an especially joyous time, as the Weasley twins managed to aptly point out.

“ Just think,” Fred said in the common room the night after the last exam, “ We’re free to go out into the world now and cause as much mayhem as we like. We’re adults in the truest sense of the word.”

“ Too true, brother mine,” George agreed, “ Just imagine the havoc we can cause outside of these walls.”

A collective groan came from most of the Gryffindor common room as the rest of the students realised that while Hogwarts might be quieter in the future, the rest of wizarding Britain wouldn’t be safe from the prankster twins.

“ You know, it’s kind of sad,” Harry mused.

“ In what way?” Fred asked.

“ Well, just think, we’ll never again be in a position to torment Filch. Or Mrs. Norris. Or Professor McGonagall. Or even Professor Snape. Inside Hogwarts, we are legends. People to be revered for our pranks, and for future jokesters to look up to. As you said, outside these four walls we are free to wreak havoc, but we will never again be in a community where we are legends. We will be relegated to amusing pests.”

The identical looks of shock and horror on the twins’ faces were classic, and the time travellers cracked up. Fred and George had



obviously never considered what people would think of them outside of Hogwarts, and now that Harry had kindly pointed it out to them, they knew that once they left they would never again gain the same amount of infamy as in the school itself.

“ Well, Fred, we’ll just have to make our last two weeks special.”

“ Indeed we will, George,” the other twin replied once they had regained the power of speech, “ You guys have to help.”

“ In what way?” Ron asked.

“ Well, you have the connections to pull it off,” Fred told him, referring to the erratic poltergeist.

“ What do you have in mind?” Harry asked, curious.

“ This is...”

“ ...the end of an era...”

“ ...for Hogwarts. The last of the original Marauders will...”

“ ...be leaving forever, and we humble copycats along with you.”

“ They’ve got a point,” Glen interjected.

“ We propose we have one last blast,” Fred said with a maniacal grin.

“ An exit worthy of *Hogwarts: A History*,” George agreed.

“ We’ll go out with a bang...”

“ ...literally...”

“ ...and show the younger years that the spirit of the prankster must be continued.”

The time travellers all grinned at the pair. What they had said was true; it was the end of an era. They would finally all be leaving Hogwarts, for some of them after eight very trying years. They were finally being thrust into the real world, far away from the safety of the

school. From hereon out, they were on their own. They couldn't hide behind the wards and Dumbledore anymore, as they had since they were eleven. Dumbledore was gone, as was their childhood. An end of an era indeed, for now they would have to face the wider world.

Over the next two weeks in the run up to the end of term, Hogwarts was filled with frustrated students and staff members. True to their word, the twins were making their remaining time count, and with the time travellers, Sirius, Remus, Minh, Eustace and the ghosts on their side, they were a formidable force. Minerva had threatened to expel them, nullifying the exam results they would have received, but in the end she decided that they all deserved to let off some steam after the year they had had. After all, most of the pranks were completely harmless. The bog in the second floor corridor was slightly annoying, and the suits of armour all over the castle that sang Christmas carols whenever anyone walked past were a little disconcerting, considering it was July. Apart from that, the students and staff saw the funny side most of the time. However, after two weeks solid, they were all ready to go home for the holidays. There was only so much they could take, and after several staff members had been hit with Harry's self created Julio-Claudian jinx, Minerva decided it was time for her to draw the line.

Having been banned from playing any pranks two days before the end of term, the Marauders and company decided to focus their energy on creating something truly spectacular. After several hours in Harry's room in Gryffindor Tower, they finally came up with the best solution. Something so spectacular, it would go down in the history books. They already knew that several Ministry officials and parents had been invited to the Leaving Feast, as a plaque to Dumbledore was to be unveiled, so it would be unwise to prank the whole school. After Sirius suggested the time travellers think back to the previous year, it was decided that instead of going out with a prank, they would go out with a song. The Marauders, past and present were writing a play, and its title was – Spectacular, Spectacular.

The Leaving Feast started the same as every other, with the exception of the invited guests there for the dedication and unveiling of the new plaque. The new Minister for Magic, Aberforth Dumbledore, stood up once everyone was there and made a lengthy

speech, similar to the one he have at his brother's funeral, and unveiled the new memorial wall behind the teachers' table. Upon it was the name of every casualty of the wars with Voldemort, and not just the ones who had died, but people such as the Longbottoms who, while still breathing, had lost their lives so that others might be free. In the centre was a round plaque dedicated to Albus Dumbledore.

*An interesting choice, the voice inside Harry's mind commented, though I would have preferred it in canary yellow.*

Harry gained several strange looks from his fellow Gryffindors when he chuckled quietly during Aberforth's speech. Most of the people around him thought he was mad, as the death of their headmaster was no laughing matter. Harry, though, simply thought to himself that none of those behind the disapproving looks had the elderly wizard in their heads.

Once the formalities were taken care of, the food arrived and everyone began to stuff themselves with as much as they could. After all, for the seventh years it would be their last meal at Hogwarts. Towards the end of dinner, just as dessert was arriving, the conspirators slipped out of the Great Hall, mostly unnoticed. They gathered in the Entrance Hall and summoned their costumes, taking a few minutes to go over their lines and props. The ghosts had the most important job of all, as they were arranging the special effects. Eventually, once they were all sorted out, Harry lifted his hand and made a pushing motion towards the entrance to the Great Hall. The doors slammed open, gathering everyone's attention. When the students and staff saw them standing there, they let out loud groans, believing they were preparing for a final prank. With a grin, the Weasley twins moved to the front and cast sonorous charms on each other.

"Hello, Hogwarts! We know what you're thinking, and you'd, surprisingly, be wrong."

"Surely you are expecting us to do something terrible..."

"...horrible..."

“...vile...”

“...and cruel. But you would be wrong. After being banned from pranking the lot of you,” George said, sending Minerva a pointed look, “We came to the conclusion that you all deserved a treat for putting up with us all for so long. Tomorrow, we have to leave Hogwarts forever, and we wanted to go out with a bang...”

“...so in honour of this momentous occasion, we are bringing you an evening of wonder...”

“...fantasy...”

“...music and dance...”

“...to celebrate our leaving. So without further ado...”

“...the Marauders, past and present, proudly present...”

“Spectacular Spectacular!”

As soon as the twins finished their speech, the time travellers waved their hands and conjured a large stage in front of the doors. Music started from somewhere in the rafters, and the group on stage began their show. Having a limited amount of time, they had chosen to take old Muggle and Wizarding songs and form a play around them, saving them the effort of writing their own songs. There was something for everyone, with humour, drama, and a rather compelling love story.

Everyone laughed when Minh came on stage dressed as a Viking and sang an aria. People cried when Hermione's character was killed by a deranged house elf. Chuckles could be heard when Fred and George had a duel with rubber chickens, and the girls swooned when Harry paraded around in a skimpy costume.

The climax of the play reached everyone, though. Harry's character was asked to prove his love for Ginny's, and the ensuing 'battle' reminded everyone what the Order had been fighting for. It was the small things. The love between one person and another. Those were the things worth saving.

When Harry came to his final song, he was suddenly struck by how appropriate it was. Looking over at Ginny, he realised that everything in his life was falling into place. He was happy, truly happy, for the first time he could remember. There was only one thing that would make him happier. In that moment, he decided to change the script. Quietly, he began to sing the final song. As he reached the last few lines, he moved to stand in front of Ginny, who gave him a startled look. He looked deeply into her eyes as he sang the last part of the song.

“ And you can tell everybody,

This is your song.

It may be quite simple, but

Now that it's done.

I hope you don't mind.

I hope you don't mind.

That I put down in words.

How wonderful life is,

Now you're in the world.”

Harry looked at Ginny intently and bent down on one knee, summoning a small velvet box from his room into his hand. He had been planning this for the last few weeks, and could think of no better time. Ginny stared at him in shock, and the people watching gasped loudly as Harry sang the last lines of the song.

“ Hope you don't mind.

I hope you don't mind.

That I put down in words.

How wonderful life is,

Now you're in the world."

There was a collective gasp and Harry opened the box, revealing a beautiful diamond ring. Ron, Fred and George were gaping at their friend as he knelt in front of their slightly weeping sister. Harry smiled at the love of his life and began to speak.

"Ginny, I love you. I have loved you for a long time now, though I've not always shown it. You are the woman I want to spend the rest of my life with. Will you marry me?"

Silence reigned in the Hall as the onlookers waited with baited breath for her answer. After what seemed like an eternity, a brilliant smile broke out on Ginny's face as she knelt next to the man she loved and embraced him tightly, telling him her answer.

"Yes!"

### Chapter Thirty – The Real World

“ Yes!”

The word echoed in Harry’s head as the crowd around him began to cheer loudly. The meaning of what Ginny had just said didn’t penetrate his mind for what seemed like an eternity, but when it did he grinned madly and pulled his fiancé into a crushing hug, kissing her thoroughly. When they finally parted, he slipped the diamond ring out of the box and pushed it gently onto her delicate finger.

“ It’s beautiful,” she said in awe.

“ Its beauty pales when compared to you,” he replied, making her smile even wider. The moment was broken when Harry felt an insistent tapping on his shoulder. Looking behind him, he came face to face with stony faced looking Weasleys.

“ What’s all this about?” Ron demanded, crossing his arms. Harry’s grin quickly faded.

“ Do you have a problem with this?” Harry asked, a little nervous when the twins’ gazes bored into him.

“ I hope you realise that this is our little sister,” Fred said.

“ And as such, we want to make sure you realise that if you ever hurt her, you will have us to answer to,” George told him. Harry moved to stand in front of the Weasley brothers, Ginny’s hand held firmly in his.

“ I would never hurt Ginny, no matter what happened. I love her very much, and want to spend the rest of my life showing her how much she means to me. I hope I can make her happy, and that’s all I want. I would walk over hot coals for her. I would die for her. I would give up my magic if it would keep her safe. I am willing to sacrifice everything that is dear to me to protect her. If you doubt that, then ask anything of me that would prove to you that I love her beyond all reason.”

The three flame haired boys stared into Harry's face, scrutinising him closely. After several minutes, they gave each other significant looks before breaking out in grins.

" Well, if that's the case, then welcome to the family!" George exclaimed, pulling the startled boy into his arms and giving him a brief hug, quickly followed by Fred and Ron. The watching students and staff cheered heartily, causing the Weasley boys to turn red in embarrassment.

" I think that is our cue to leave," Ron muttered. That said, the pranksters all took a bow before banishing the stage and leaving the Great Hall, heading to Harry's room for a party, joined quickly by the friends they had on the staff.

" Congratulations, both of you," Minerva gushed, showing an unusual amount of emotion, " I hope you will both be very happy together."

The headmistress was soon followed by the rest of the staff, before Harry's family came to speak to him. After each receiving hugs and congratulations from the elves, the Potters, Sirius, Remus and Heather, Ginny and Harry went to talk to their friends.

" Do you have a problem with this, Glen?" Harry asked his son.

" It's fine, Dad," Glen said with a smile, giving his father and soon to be stepmother a firm hug each.

" Are you sure you're ready for this?" Hermione asked, a slight frown marring her forehead.

" I'm ready to settle down," Harry said, " All I've ever wanted was a family to love, and now that the threat of Voldemort's gone, I can finally be happy. I know I have Glen, Heather, Minh and Eustace, but I need more than that. Call me selfish if you like, but when you spend most of your life without love and affection, you tend to crave it. I love Ginny, and I feel like I want to spend the rest of my life with her. Why wait?"

Hermione thought over his words and finally nodded her head, giving each of them a firm hug. The four talked for a while, before Harry



was distracted by a figure hovering in the background, looking as if she wanted to talk to him. Whispering something in Ginny's ear, he moved over to the ghost and stood in front of her.

"Are you alright with this, 'Tea?" he asked gently. When she lifted her bent head and looked at him, he gasped at the sight of ghostly tears trailing down her cheek.

"I'm fine, Harry. I'm happy for you. Really," she said with a delicate sniff. Harry wanted nothing more at that moment than to put his arms around her and comfort her.

"'Tea, I love you. I always will, you know that, right?"

"But you love her now too," she concluded with a watery smile. Harry nodded slowly.

"'Tea, I will always have a special place in my heart for you, but as you told me in the past, I have to move on. I'm eighteen; I hopefully have a lot of years ahead of me."

"I know that, Harry, but it still hurts. I just have to think that in all of those years you have to come, I would rather you are happy with another woman than miserable by yourself. I love you, Harry, but I have to let you go. You will always have my friendship, no matter what."

By this time, Harry was also crying. Feeling stirrings of Dumbledore's mind in his head, he did as the headmaster's soul urged him to do. He reached out his arms, noting a slight ethereal glow around his limbs, and managed to pull the Ravenclaw ghost into a tight embrace. Both were shocked when his hands didn't go through her insubstantial form, instead resting gently on her spirit and pulling it toward him. The pair remained like that for several minutes before reluctantly pulling apart. They watched transfixed as the glow receded, and Harry sent a mental 'thank you' to Dumbledore. He didn't know what the wily wizard had done to make that possible, but he wasn't going to question it.

After moving back to his fiancé, the pair made the rounds of their friends, accepting hugs and well wishes from everyone. At nine o'clock, Harry glanced at his watch and nudged Ginny.

"Gin, I think there are a couple more people we need to talk to before bed, don't you?"

Ginny thought a minute, and then nodded, pulling Harry by the hand toward the fireplace. After thanking their guests for their kind thoughts, they left the party and flooed to the Burrow, quickly followed by Ron and the twins. When they arrived, they were met with surprised looks from Molly and Arthur, who had been sitting by the fire, reading.

"What are you lot doing here?" Molly asked, staring at her children in surprise, "I thought Hogwarts didn't finish until tomorrow."

"It doesn't," Ron said, looking at his sister and best friend, "But something's come up."

"Mr. Weasley, Mrs. Weasley, could I talk to you in private, please?" Harry asked, surprising the pair. Nodding their heads, they led the Boy-Who-Lived into the kitchen, shutting the door behind them and sitting down at the large kitchen table. Arthur absently cast a silencing charm on the door, as well as securing it against Fred and George's Extendable Ears.

"What's this about, Harry dear," Molly asked, "Is something wrong?"

Harry shifted in his seat, nervously. He knew that he would have to speak to the Weasleys at some point, but he was nervous about their reactions. They were like family to him, and he didn't want to risk upsetting or offending them. He hoped that by doing everything in the proper and respectful manner, he would prevent them from objecting too strongly.

"There's nothing wrong, Mrs. Weasley, I just have something to ask you."

"Ask away, Harry my lad," Arthur said.

“ Um...well...I-I wanted to ask for your permission to marry your daughter.”

This statement was met with stony silence as the couple stared at Harry in surprise and shock. This only made him more nervous, and he shifted around in his seat, looking anywhere but at the people he thought of as adoptive parents. After a long silence, Arthur cleared his throat and struggled to speak.

“ Harry, are you serious,” he asked.

“ Yes, Mr. Weasley. I love your daughter more than life itself, and I want to spend the rest of my life making her happy. I asked her to marry me earlier tonight, and she agreed. I just thought it would be the right thing to do to ask your permission.”

After more silence, the Weasley parents did exactly as their sons had done. Broad grins spread across their faces and Molly pulled him into a crushing hug, while Arthur vigorously shook his hand.

“ Oh, Harry, I can’t think of anyone better for our Ginny than you,” Molly gushed, happy tears streaming down her face, “ We’d love to have you as part of our family!”

“ I agree,” Arthur said, “ Who’d’ve thought it, our Ginny and Harry Potter! Amazing! Never thought she’d be the first to tie the knot, though. When will the wedding be?”

“ Erm...We haven’t thought that far ahead,” Harry said when Molly released him from the bear hug.

“ Well, we’ll have to get planning!” Molly squealed, clapping her hands in joy, “ We have flowers to choose, and bridesmaid robes, oh and the food! How many were you thinking of inviting, Harry dear?”

Harry’s head began to spin as she rattled of different colours and fabrics for the chair covers and multiple designs of place setting cards. After a few minutes of excited chatter, the three were interrupted by a tentative knock on the door. After the spells were taken down, the four youngest Weasley children all came in and took seats at the table, Ginny right next to Harry so she could take his

hand. For the next hour, the family discussed the future, and the wedding of the first of the Weasley siblings.

The next day, Harry was roused from his sleep bright and early by the excited chatter of his roommates. Looking around the dorm, he saw everyone else was frantically packing everything, ready to head down to breakfast in the Great Hall.

“Come on, Harry, get up!” Ron said, “We’re leaving today!”

With a groan, Harry pulled himself out of the bed and headed for the showers. Ten minutes later he returned, throwing on his smartest casual robes and lobbing the rest of his possessions into his trunk at random. When he realised that he couldn’t fit anything else into it, he waved his hand absently in the trunk’s direction while pulling out his broom from under his bed. When he went to throw the broom inside, everything had righted itself and was packed neatly. The rest of his dorm mates looked at him strangely, catching his attention.

“What?” he asked.

“What was *that*?” Ron asked.

“What?” Harry repeated innocently.

“That charm! It-it righted everything! Packed it all! *Neatly!*”

“Just something I picked up last year. You’d be surprised how many handy charms the Slytherins know for keeping things tidy. After all, they have an image to maintain,” he said haughtily as he closed his trunk with a sharp click, turned, and strode out of the door, leaving the rest of the room’s occupants gaping after him.

At breakfast, the Great Hall was in utter chaos. Fred and George had set off some of their newest inventions, making nearly everyone forget where they had placed their trunks. Those who *did* remember kept telling the victims where their belongings were, but the unfortunate souls promptly forget again, causing them to panic. Harry sent the twins a wicked look before discreetly waving his hand in the direction of the Slytherin table, gluing every one of them to their seats. When they came to leave the Hall after breakfast,

they found that they couldn't move. With a malicious grin, Harry set a timer for the spell to end – five minutes after the Hogwarts Express was due to leave. Fred and George burst into hysterical laughter when he told them what he had done.

At the end of breakfast, those who *could* left the Great Hall and collected their luggage before preparing to leave the school. Just as the students were moving out of the Entrance Hall, Harry cast sonorus on himself.

“ *Hem, Hem!*”

Everyone stopped instantly, sending him incredulous looks. He looked back sheepishly and shrugged his shoulders.

“ Sorry, couldn't resist. Just wanted to ask if you would mind if I took a photo of the lot of you.”

They gave him skeptical looks.

“ I know it's a strange request, but I've had a school photo taken at the end of the year in every time period I've been to. I just think the collection wouldn't be complete without one of the people I grew up with. I'll even unstick the Slytherins as a sign of goodwill!”

The students from the other three Houses laughed, and the Slytherins scowled, but when Harry lifted the charm they all made their way to the Hogwarts steps as instructed and arranged themselves by House and year. The staff took their places at the front, and Ginny set the camera on the timer. As soon as the flash went off, the students moved away and the time travellers congregated on the steps with Fred and George.

“ I guess this is it, then,” Harry said, sadly, looking up at the castle that had been his home for eight long years.

“ Indeed it is,” Fred said, “ As soon as we get on that train we've officially graduated.”

As the seven students headed over to one of the thestral drawn carriages, Harry reflected on the time he had spent at the school. It

had been his home, his sanctuary, and his prison for many years, and now it was time to leave it forever. The end of an era it was indeed, and now it was time for him to face the most frightening thing in existence. More frightening than Dementors. More frightening than Grindelwald. More frightening than Voldemort.

It was time to face the real world.

### Chapter Thirty One – Something Old, Something New...

As soon as the group reached Platform 9¾, the time travellers apparated to Domus Corvus Corax, their residence for the rest of the summer. They could have easily flooed there from Hogwarts, but they wanted to savour their last ever trip on the Hogwarts Express. It was a tradition, after all, and one they would not be partaking of in the future, at least not as students. Fred and George met up with Lee Jordan and headed for the Burrow.

As soon as the time travellers arrived at Corvus Corax, they let out a collective sigh. Harry led the way upstairs to the bedrooms, allowing the other three to choose their rooms along the way, before he slipped quietly into the master bedroom and flopped down on the bed. Twenty minutes later, he heard a knock at the door.

“ Come in!” he called, wearily. He was a little surprised to see his grandmother at the door.

“ Hello Harry, do you mind if I talk to you?”

“ No, go ahead,” he said, conjuring her up a comfortable chair by his bedside.

“ Harry, I wanted to talk to you about something my aunt mentioned. The reconciliation of the elves and the humans.”

Harry sat up in bed, leaning against the headboard, and thought the matter over. It was something he had been meaning to do for the last three years, but the time had never been right. There had always been a war going on, taking up his time. Now, though, the war was over, and he had plenty of time to carry out his promise.

“ What’s the situation at the moment?” he finally asked, “ I know that Mei and Lei’s group were banished for supporting humans six hundred years ago, and that Eustace has lived in the elf world for many years, but what are the thoughts of the elves? Do they still hate humans?”

“ Humans are still widely mistrusted, despite my husband’s presence in my home. However, a few have come around to my family’s way of

thinking. I believe, with a little effort from the humans, we could mend the damage done by hundreds of years of hatred.”

“ Alright, I’ll see what I can do. We’ll discuss it tonight at the Order meeting.”

Satisfied, Minh gave her grandson a tender hug, before making her way out of the room.

That night, Harry called what was to be the last Order of the Phoenix meeting. As it was a special occasion, marking the disbanding of the Order, it was a full meeting, with every single member in attendance. As everyone took their seats with their groups, Harry stood at the head table with the rest of the council members, looking out sadly upon the numbers present.

“ So many lost,” the Boy-Who-Lived murmured to himself. While there were still a lot of people there, there was a noticeable drop in the total number. The Order had suffered in the final battle, despite their victory. When it appeared that everyone had arrived, Harry cleared his throat and called order.

“ Everyone, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your dedication to the Order of the Phoenix, and the side of Light. Without your help, Voldemort would have won the war, and the wizarding world would have been lost. Yes, we have lost many. Too many. But their sacrifice has given us our freedom! Yes, we will mourn them, as they deserve, but we will not allow their sacrifices to be in vain. We have our lives back, and we have our fallen comrades to thank.”

The Order let out a loud cheer in support of their leader. Each and every one of them had been affected by the loss of their friends and family. They knew that their deaths were not meaningless, and that thought gave them strength and hope for the future.

“ I have called you all here today,” Harry continued, “ To disband the Order until the next time it is called upon to protect the innocents of the wizarding world. Let us hope that it is not for a very long time! Thank you all, for your devotion and courage. You all deserve the highest praise. Congratulations, everyone, we beat them!”



The crowd roared in approval, and Harry beamed back at them. There was a general feeling of relief in the room, everyone filled with hope and happiness. The war with Voldemort was finally over, after more than twenty years. Never again would the Dark Lord's name haunt the wizarding population.

Harry grinned widely and spread his hands. Several loud bangs sounded around the room, and a rain of confetti fell from the ceiling.

“ I officially declare the Order of the Phoenix disbanded!” Harry yelled, “ And I think we deserve a party!”

With several waves of his hands, Harry conjured several tables full of food and drink of all kinds. Decorations appeared throughout the meeting room, and the large tables were replaced with hundreds of smaller, round tables scattered around the room. A dance floor appeared in the very centre, and soft music began to play in the background. Harry looked around at the happy faces and smiled happily. After what everyone here had been through, he felt they deserved to let their hair down for a night. Turning to his fiancé, he held out a hand to her.

“ May I have this dance?” he asked a blushing Ginny.

“ I would be honoured,” she replied, taking the proffered hand and leading him to the dance floor. Across the room, Ron did the same, pulling Hermione to the floor with him. As the two couples danced side by side, they felt a deep sense of peace.

A while later, after the time travellers and their friends had had several turns on the dance floor with a combination of people, and had eaten their fill from the buffet table, Harry sidled up to Severus and caught his solemn friend's attention.

“ You alright, Sev?” he asked.

“ Sure, never better,” the Potions Master replied, distractedly.

“ Strange that,” Harry said, “ You seem decidedly tense. What's the matter?”

“ It’s nothing,” Sev snapped. Harry raised one eyebrow at him and gave him a disbelieving look.

“ Sev, you’re one of my best friends, I know when something’s bothering you. Now spill!”

With a deep sigh, Severus seemed to visibly deflate in front of his young friend. He could never keep anything from Harry.

“ It’s just...I feel like I don’t know what to do with myself now that Shirley’s gone. I mean, for twenty years my life has revolved around correcting the situation my father forced me into, and paying my debt to society. Now that it’s all over, I don’t know what place I have in the world anymore. I mean, who wants a washed up old Death Eater?”

“ Don’t talk like that!” Harry growled, “ You have plenty to offer!”

“ Like what?” Sev sneered.

“ You’re a brilliant Potions Master! You could do anything you wanted in that field. You’re also an expert in fields such as Defence Against the Dark Arts. There are so many things you can do now!”

“ Harry, think about it!” Severus griped with a sneer, “ I’m a Death Eater! I always will be! You really think that employers will be willing to take on one of the Dark Lord’s followers now that he’s been defeated?”

“ Well, we’ll just take away that excuse, then,” Harry said, grabbing Sev by the arm. The Potions Master watched in confusion as his young friend pushed up his sleeve and revealed the ugly black tattoo on his arm. Before the man had the chance to object, Harry placed his hand upon the Mark and began to mutter under his breath. Severus felt a slight tingling, and when Harry moved his hand away, it revealed perfect, unblemished skin underneath.

“ I told you I’d take it away some day,” Harry said with a sad smile, watching as silent tears began to leak from Severus’ eyes as he looked intently at his flawless skin.

“ H-Harry,” he said once he regained the power of speech, “ I don’t know how to thank you...”

“ You don’t have to,” Harry said, patting the other man on the back, “ A promise is a promise, and it was me who encouraged you to keep it in the first place.”

His piece said, Harry moved back over to his friends, leaving the ex-spy to savour his first taste of true freedom in twenty years.

Over the next few weeks, Harry and Ginny began to plan their wedding. Molly had tried to take over several times, but her daughter was adamant that she plan it herself. It was the only wedding she would be having, so she wanted to savour the experience. Molly, after all, would be able to help plan her brothers’ weddings in the future. Harry had been having problems as well, mainly centered on who he should ask to fulfill each role in his wedding. The easiest was Sirius, who he asked to stand in for his father. The animagus, when asked, had been understandably touched by the sentiment, and readily agreed. The other roles, though, were proving more problematic. He didn’t know who to ask to be his best man, and who to ask to officiate. As far as the best man was concerned, he couldn’t choose between Severus and Ron. Both were really good friends, but he didn’t want to have to choose between them. The same problem arose with whom to ask to perform the ceremony. He would have liked Dumbledore to do the honours, but since the former headmaster was dead, it was impossible. Glen also should have a role to play, but Harry wasn’t sure where he fit into the picture.

Harry and Ginny had found one hurdle that they couldn’t overcome when deciding on a date and venue. While they had physically and emotionally aged during their time in the past, legally they were still underage. Their birth certificates showed that they were fifteen and fourteen, not eighteen and seventeen. Legally, they were not allowed to marry for another three years at least.

After several weeks of planning, putting the legality problems to the back of their minds, Harry struck upon an idea. Thinking back to the conversation he had with Minh about the elves, a solution suddenly presented itself. Over breakfast, he made a suggestion to his fiancé.

“Gin, I’ve had an idea.”

“What’s that?” Ginny asked curiously.

“I think I’ve found a way around the legal problems.”

“Really?” she asked, excited.

“How would you feel about getting married in the elf world?” he asked her, and was rewarded with a bright smile.

“Really? We could do that?”

“I don’t see why not. They don’t have a law there about marrying ages. Most elves wait until they are at least a few centuries old before considering settling down, so the issue doesn’t really arise that often. If I could get the elves to allow us to perform the ceremony there, it would be legal.”

“That’s great, Harry!” Ginny squealed, pulling her husband-to-be into a tight hug.

“It would also give me an excuse to try and improve human-elf relations. I promised Lolide I would help build bridges, and before now I’ve been too busy to do that. Now, though, I don’t have an excuse. If I take a delegation to the elf world and speak to them, we may be able to wrangle a small wedding party. They would be able to meet some more humans, and get to participate in one of our celebrations. I think it could do a lot of good.”

“If that’s what you want, Harry, it’s fine with me. We can have a traditional elven wedding if you would prefer.”

“How about a compromise,” Harry suggested, “We combine traditional wizarding and elven customs, thus satisfying both of our families.”

“Sounds good,” Ginny replied, giving him a deep kiss.

Harry’s nineteenth birthday came and went with modest celebrations and a small party. The first day of August, Harry decided it was time

to put his plan into action. Since he struck upon the idea of marrying in the elf world, he had been speaking to various people, both former Order members and Ministry officials, gathering a delegation to send to the elves in an attempt to start the healing process. The wizarding world had grown to believe true elves a myth or an extinct race. Harry hoped that by raising awareness amongst his own people by involving the Ministry, he could stop the fear and misunderstandings of the past from reappearing.

He had never understood what had happened in the past to cause the rift, but from what he could gather, the elves had somehow been hurt by the humans, forcing them to abandon their homes in the wizarding world and return to their ancestral homeland. If he could prove to the elves that the wizarding world had changed, and could accept them, they may just listen to reason.

Harry spent the day visiting every one of the volunteers, asking them to meet him at Corvus Corax the next day. He then sent word to Lolide, giving her chance to prepare the elven elders for their arrival. He didn't want to just turn up unannounced, as he thought it would be rude, and he knew the elders would need time to discuss their imminent arrival. Thankfully the time difference between the two worlds meant that the elves had several weeks to discuss matters.

The next day, the delegation arrived bright and early at Domus Corvus Corax. Harry was pacing in the ball room when they entered, startling him slightly.

"Glad you could make it," he said with a grin.

"We wouldn't miss it for the world," Aberforth replied, "After all, this is a momentous occasion for the wizarding world. The elves were great friends of magical folk until the Middle Ages. We would like to regain their trust, and hopefully we can learn a lot from each other."

"I'm sure we will," Remus added, "I just hope they appreciate our efforts."

"I can't see it being too much of a problem," Arthur said, "I mean, Eustace has been living with them for years. They must have warmed to him at least a little."

“ You’d be surprised,” the eldest Potter told him, “ Ever since I turned up, there have been some who accepted me and some who didn’t. Over the years, many became friendly with me, but I don’t know if they’ll extend the same courtesy to the rest of the humans.”

“ At least we can try,” Harry said, “ We have nothing to lose, and everything to gain.”

As soon as everyone was ready, Harry took out his purple transportation stone and took them all to the elf world in a brilliant flash of light. Those who had never been before looked around in awe at the tree houses all around them. Eustace looked at the place with a soft smile on his face. It was obvious he now considered Falaryth home. Harry was also pleased to be back, even though he hadn’t been that often, he felt a connection to the place that the others couldn’t understand. The only ones who didn’t seem to be too happy about being there were the Teutoburg twins. They were both looking at their former home with sadness tinged with fear.

“ Harry, are you sure this is a good idea?” Leilani asked in her own language.

“ It’ll be fine,” he answered in kind.

“ I don’t think you understand. We were *banished*. It’s not something to be taken lightly. We’re risking a public execution!”

“ I thought elves were pacifists,” Harry said with a frown.

“ We are, generally. But some things are beyond that, and banishment is one of them,” Meilani told him.

“ I won’t let them do anything,” the boy promised, leading the group in the direction of the elders’ council chamber. As they moved through the forest city, elves of all ages left their homes to watch the small procession. Many of them remembered Harry, and shouted greetings as he passed. He waved at them as he walked, taking the time to hug some of the younger elves. The same went for Eustace and Minh, who greeted their friends enthusiastically. The rest of the group felt decidedly alien in this strange world.

When they finally reached the council chamber, Harry moved forward and knocked on the door. A portly elf opened it and stepped aside, holding the door open while the group entered. The elders had obviously been expecting them.

“ Come this way, please,” the elf said, leading them into a large airy room with semicircle of chairs set up at the far end. In each sat an elderly elf, making up a council of the oldest and wisest elves in the city. Harry gestured for the others to stay back as he moved towards the council and performed the formal elven greetings.

“ Greetings, Wise Ones,” he said in elvish, “ I am Harry Potter, grandson of Minh-Minh-Lama, daughter of Gaerwyn-Lama, daughter of Kaiari-Lama. I bring a delegation from the human world, to talk peace. May we be granted the gift of your time?”

The elders seemed impressed that a human knew their formalities and language, and muttered to each other briefly before the she-elf in the centre spoke to Harry.

“ We grant you an audience, grandson of Minh-Minh-Lama.”

“ Thank you, Elder. Let me present to you our delegation. Unfortunately, most of them do not know your tongue, so I ask permission to interpret.”

“ Permission granted,” the she-elf replied with a nod.

“ Let me introduce to you Aberforth Dumbledore, Minister for Magic of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Remus Lupin, ambassador of the werewolves. Arthur Weasley, Muggle representative. Sirius Black, representative of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Eustace Potter, father of James Potter, father of Harry Potter. Glenadade Potter, son of Harry Potter, grandson of Minh-Minh-Lama, daughter of Gaerwyn-Lama. Virginia Weasley, my fiancé. Meilani-Minh-Lama and Leilani-Minh-Lama, daughters of Lolide-Lama, daughter of Kaiari-Lama, son of Kodwyn-Lama, representatives of the banished elves.”

The elders nodded to each person in turn, their eyes narrowing when they reached the twins. Mei and Lei shifted uncomfortably under their

scrutiny, but didn't say anything. The others were looking confused, not having understood what was being said, but they had picked up on the lists of names. Being ignorant of elf customs, they sent Harry several strange looks. Harry just hoped they wouldn't comment on it until later.

"Why have you come here? And in the presence of traitors," the spokes-elf asked, giving Harry a wary look.

Harry proceeded to explain that he had travelled through time, and been taught the ways of the elves by his great aunt Lolide. He told them of the wars that had torn the human world apart, and their recent victory over Voldemort. When he was finished, he explained that he wanted to forge a truce between his people and theirs. The elders listened to the tale avidly, interrupting only to ask for clarification on certain points. With the help of Harry, Remus, Sirius, Arthur and Aberforth made offers on behalf of their areas of the wizarding world, asking the elves to consider peace and co-existence. Eventually, the spokes-elf cleared her throat and gave her decision.

"We are a peaceful people, untouched by war for millennia. We have lived in harmony with nature for eons, and our way of life is precious to us. We would like to know what would happen should we accept your offer of friendship. Your words have shown us that the human race has grown over the time our races have been separated, but we cannot judge a race on its leaders alone. We need assurance that our way of life will not be threatened in any way."

"We assure you, Blessed Elder, that we mean your people no harm. We simply feel that both sides could benefit from a treaty. We can share knowledge and hopefully forge a renewed understanding between our worlds. The elves would be free to visit our world without fear of rejection. In return, we ask only that you resolve your hatred of our people."

"That sounds acceptable," the she-elf replied, "But I must stress that the general population of Falaryth will not be as quick to accept you. Eustace Potter was accepted as the spouse of an elf. Harry Potter, you are accepted as the son of a part elf. Your fiancé, also, would be



accepted as the spouse of an elf-blood. The others, however, need to prove themselves to our world.”

“ I have a proposition,” Harry said, looking at the others for confirmation that he could ask. When Aberforth nodded, Harry outlined his idea to hold the wedding ceremony in Falaryth, saying that it would be a good opportunity for elves and humans to interact.

“ Very well,” the elder said, “ You may hold your ceremony in the home of Kaiari-Lama and Ginavive-Minh-Lama. But I warn you, if any harm comes to any elf, you shall be held responsible.”

“ Thank you, Great Elder,” Harry said with a bow, before turning to the others and ushering them out of the council chamber. As soon as they returned to Corvus Corax, Harry congratulated them on a job well done.

The next few weeks were frantic for Harry and Ginny. They planned to marry the day before Hogwarts started for the new term, giving them enough time to plan, but also allowing the Hogwarts staff members to attend without missing any of the school year. Over the weeks, Harry worked closely with Molly Weasley to try and integrate elven and wizarding wedding customs. Everything was starting to take shape, all Harry had left to do was choose his best man, and settle on someone to officiate. Hermione couldn't perform the ceremony, as she was Ginny's maid of honour. Glen wouldn't be appropriate for either position. Sirius was standing in for James Potter as the groom's father. Minh and Eustace also had their own places in the ceremony. Remus was a good friend, but Harry didn't know him as well as some of the other people. Vrykolakas couldn't attend the wedding due to a prior commitment. That left Ron and Severus. Eventually, Harry decided that he wanted his best friend to stand by him. Ron it was, and he was thrilled when Harry asked him to be his best man. That left Severus.

Harry knew that his friend had been feeling a little useless since the downfall of Voldemort. It was as if his entire reason for living had been taken away from him. He had visited Domus Corvus Corax a few times, but spent most of the summer holidays locked away in his Hogwarts dungeon, experimenting with some of the ancient potions in

Harry's books. He was decidedly startled when Harry turned up at his door one day in late August.

"Hi Sev," the younger man said when the Potions Master answered the door.

"Hello, Harry, what can I do for you?"

"I have a favour to ask," Harry said as he was ushered over the chairs by the fireplace.

"Harry, you know I'll do anything you ask. I owe you, after all," Severus said, glancing at his arm. Harry rolled his eyes at his friend.

"Sev, you don't owe me for that. I promised you I would get rid of it when your spying days were over. If anything, *I owe you.*"

"If you say so," Sev conceded, not sounding at all convinced. Harry let the subject drop.

"Sev, I came to ask if you would officiate at my wedding."

Sev was stunned. This was the last thing he was expecting.

"I-I don't know what to say," he stuttered.

"Just say yes. Please, Sev. You're one of my best friends; I need you to take part in my wedding. I was considering you for best man, but I asked Ron. After all, he's been my best friend for eight years. I thought if I couldn't have you for best man, officiator would be the best thing."

"I...of course I will, Harry. I'm honoured you asked me."

Harry gave his friend a bright smile, and a light hug. When he left later that night, he had only one thought swirling through his head.

*Only the Dursleys left to ask...*

Harry

## Chapter Thirty Two – Looking to the Future, or is it the Past?

The day after asking Severus to officiate found Harry and Ginny standing on the doorstep of number 4, Privet Drive. Returning to Little Whinging was something Harry really didn't want to do, but he felt it would help him to leave his past behind and look positively to the future. While he had resisted thinking about his life with the Dursleys for so long, he decided he needed closure. His aunt and uncle had never been nice to him, but the least he could do was to invite them to his wedding. Actually, 'invite' was a deceptive title to give the action. He wasn't inviting them, he was telling them.

After knocking on the door, the pair waited while they heard a loud thumping noise on the other side of the door.

"Dudley," Harry muttered under his breath, recognising his cousin's heavy footsteps. When the door was forcefully pulled open, sure enough, the large form of Dudley Dursley was on the other side. His piggy eyes scrunched up in concentration as he assessed the couple on his doorstep. Taking in Harry's taller frame, short hair and dazzling green eyes no longer obstructed by heavy spectacles, he realised who the visitor was when he glanced up and spotted the telltale lightning bolt scar.

"Potter! What do *you* want? I thought we'd gotten rid of you. When Dad turned up at the station and you weren't there, we had a party. You're not welcome here anymore, freak."

"I'd watch who you're calling a freak, Duddykins," Harry sneered, his fangs elongating slightly. Dudley blinked stupidly, before filling his lungs.

"DAAAD! THE FREAK'S AT THE DOOR."

A grunt followed by a series of loud thumps could be heard from the direction of the living room, and the large form of Vernon Dursley appeared behind his son.

"What are *you* doing here? Get off of my property, Potter. We're through with *your kind*."

“ That’s all well and good, Uncle Vernon,” Harry said, “ But all I want is a few moments of your time, then I’ll leave.”

Vernon thought it over for a few seconds before resignedly opening the door and waving the couple in. As they made their way to the living room, Dudley leered at Ginny, gaining him a scowl from his cousin. Once they were all seated and Petunia had reluctantly provided cups of tea and a plate of biscuits, Vernon cleared his throat and broke the awkward silence.

“ So, why *are* you here? Why do you look so different, and who’s *that*?” he asked, gesturing to Ginny.

“ This is Ginny, my fiancé.”

The Dursleys stared in disbelief for several seconds, before they simultaneously burst out laughing. Once they had calmed down, they turned back to a bemused Ginny and irritated Harry.

“ As if!” Dudley spluttered, “ A freak like you could never get a girlfriend. Besides, you’re too young to marry!”

“ Actually, Dudders, I think it’s *you* who would never get a girlfriend. And as for being too young, that’s not true. Something happened to me over the last year, and I’m now physically nineteen years old.”

The Dursleys didn’t know how to respond to that, so they just stared back in disbelief. With a sigh, Harry gave a very brief summary of what had happened to him, leaving his relatives gaping back at him.

“ S-so it was *you*!” Petunia gasped, “ *You* were the one who brought my sister here twenty years ago.”

“ Yes, that was me. I see you remember it. Look, *I* don’t want to be here any more than *you* want me here, I just came to invite you to my wedding.”

That was the last straw for the three Muggles. Dudley dissolved into giggles again, Vernon snorted in disgust and Petunia grew a few shades paler. Once they had recovered, Vernon asked the obvious question.

“ Just what makes you think we’d want to go to a freak wedding?”

“ Because if you do, you will never see or hear from me again, that I guarantee.”

“ And if we refuse?”

“ I’ll sic my godfather on you.”

The three paled at the mention of Sirius. Of course, they had never heard that he had been found innocent, as far as they were concerned, he was a mass murdering wizard. After thinking it over for a few minutes, Vernon finally spoke.

“ We’ll never hear from you again?”

“ No.”

“ Or your freak friends.”

“ Wizards, and no.”

“ There will be no more unnaturalness to deal with? Ever?”

“ I give you my solemn vow as a wizard that if you attend my wedding, and don’t cause trouble, you will never see or hear anything to do with the wizarding world for the rest of your lives.”

After mulling this over, the Dursley patriarch finally nodded, albeit reluctantly.

“ Alright then, we’ll come. When is it?”

“ August thirty first,” Harry told them.

“ And where will it be held?”

Harry gave the people in front of him a malicious grin.

“ In the elf world!”

The next three days were frantically busy with last minute preparations. When the time travellers woke up on the morning of the 31st, they were all surprised to find Ministry owls waiting for them at the breakfast table. After Harry gave Ginny a quick kiss, he sat down in the dining hall with his friends, taking the letter from the excited bird sitting by his plate. His eyes widened when he opened the envelope and saw the contents.

“ It’s the NEWT results!” he gasped. The other four snatched the letters from their owls and ripped them open, looking at their exam results. Glen, Hermione and Ginny all let out excited yelps and swapped letters. Ron frowned slightly at their behaviour before reading his own parchment, a faint grin appearing on his face. Harry watched amused as his friends congratulated each other. When Glen passed his letter over to his father for approval, Harry read down the list of ‘O’s and a soft smile graced his features.

“ Well done, Son,” he said, “ These are wonderful results. I’m proud of you.”

Glen beamed at the compliment, contentment filling him at his father’s approval.

“ Thanks, Dad,” he replied, “ How did *you* do?”

Harry handed his own letter over, showing the same results. It suddenly occurred to the Boy-Who-Lived how strange the situation was. How many people could say they shared breakfast with their son and both opened their NEWT results together? It certainly was a unique situation. Only in the wizarding world...

As soon as breakfast was over, the party made their way to their respective rooms to get ready. After gathering all of their supplies, the girls holed up in Ginny’s room to make the bride look beautiful. Over the course of the morning, many people began turning up at Domus Corvus Corax, joining one group or the other. Harry didn’t take very long to get ready. He was wearing simple elven wedding robes, made up of a pale green diaphanous material spun from a combination of elves’ hair and spider silk. Underneath the overrobe was a pair of well fitting trousers of the purest white, adorned with elven writing stitched in gold thread. At his side he wore his sword, a gift he had received

several years earlier from Kaiari, and on his back was the beautiful elven bow. The weapons were an important symbol at an elven wedding, showing the readiness of a warrior to protect his wife from harm. Around his head, Harry wore a thin band of silver shaped delicately and adorned with glowing emeralds.

As soon as he was ready, and Sirius and Remus had stopped fussing over him, he made his way to the portkey room to collect a portkey to Privet Drive. He thought it would be the best mode of transport for the Dursleys to experience. When the portkey activated, he found himself in the middle of his relatives' living room, startling the three and causing Petunia to spill tea down the front of her best dress. With a squeal, she leapt to her feet and made to head for the bathroom.

"Don't bother, Aunt Petunia," Harry said, and with a wave of his hand the stain disappeared. Vernon turned an ugly shade of magenta, but decided it was best to stay silent.

"Thank you for being ready," Harry said, looking at their outfits. All three were wearing their best clothes, "I have only a few last instructions. As I mentioned on my last visit, the ceremony is taking place in the elf world. Humans and elves have been at odds for hundreds of years, and only this month have we tentatively reconciled our differences. I don't want you to jeopardise that in any way. I know you don't like magic, and I respect your opinions, even though I don't agree with them. I'm grateful that you are coming to the wedding, but I must stress the importance of the situation. I am trying to build bridges, and I will not allow your prejudice to ruin any chance we may have at gaining the friendship of the elves. Therefore, I have come up with a suitable...incentive."

"And what might that be?" Vernon asked, scathingly.

Simbi, Nirah, you know what to do

If the Dursleys were startled at the hissing, they were petrified when two heads appeared from out of Harry's sleeves. Harry grinned back at them and set the two snakes on the floor and watched them make their way towards his aunt and uncle.

“ These are coral snakes. The female is called Nirah, and the male is called Simbi. They are very poisonous. I have asked each of them to accompany one of you to the wedding. If you say or do anything that could jeopardise our truce with the elves you will be bitten. If Dudley says or does anything out of turn, you will both be bitten. Do I make myself clear?” he asked as the two snakes each wrapped around one of the adults’ ankles. Petunia and Vernon simply nodded in shock. Harry wasn’t prepared to tell them that as Muggles, they had nothing to fear from magical coral snakes.

After getting the three to touch the portkey, Harry activated it and the group was whisked to Domus Corvus Corax. As soon as they set eyes on the building, their jaws immediately dropped in shock. When they moved from the portkey room into the entrance hall, Petunia almost fainted.

“ W-what is this place?” she stuttered.

“ My home,” Harry stated smugly. Revenge was sweet.

The wedding party moved out of Corvus Corax in several stages. Gaerwyn, Lolide and Minh all turned up relatively early to help Ginny with her dress, and when they left for the wedding they took as many people as they could with each stone. For many of the guests, it was their first time in the elf world, and they gaped at the scenery, taking in as many wonders as humanly possible. When Harry arrived with the last guests, including his family, he watched in amusement as the Dursleys almost fainted at the sight of people with pointed ears carrying bows and quivers of arrows. The scene didn’t exactly fit into their view of ‘normal’. When Harry showed them to their seats, they collapsed into the chairs and tried to make themselves as small as possible, which was amusing to see considering the size of Dudley and Vernon.

When he was sure everyone was seated, Harry made his way to the bottom of the aisle, taking his place next to Ron and in front of Sirius. The older animagus grinned at him and gave him two thumbs up, while the werewolf next to him gave him an encouraging smile.

*I’m pleased for you Harry,* came a voice in Harry’s head.



*Thank you, Albus,* Harry replied. He had gotten used to having the old man in his mind now. Most of the time he didn't even notice that the former headmaster was there. He sometimes made comments or gave advice that was helpful to the Boy-Who-Lived, but he was never intrusive. Harry was even pleased when Dumbledore told him he wanted to stay with him longer than he planned. Apparently the old man wasn't finished experiencing the world, and wanted to see where Harry ended up on his next trip through time.

Eventually, after everyone was seated, soft music began to play. Looking up, Harry watched as his son performed the task Harry had asked of him. The boy thought it appropriate that Glen took part in the actual ceremony. Like Harry had spoken to Gallatea and gained her permission and blessing, Glen's help in the wedding was a silent way of giving his approval for his father to move on with his life. The ancient boy was playing an elven variation of the lute. Having experience with the human version of the instrument, it had taken little practice for him to become proficient in the other. As Ginny suddenly appeared at the other end of the aisle, one arm wrapped delicately around that of her father, an unearthly music filled the air, accented by the occasional trill from Fawkes.

Ginny was wearing traditional elven robes. Like Harry's, they were made of a diaphanous but gorgeous material, this time in a soft peach. The colour accented her hair well, something which was also set off with a thin silver band, similar in design to Harry's, but with glittering rubies. Around her neck was an intricate pendent hanging from an almost invisible gold chain. Harry gasped when he first saw her. She was beautiful.

When she reached the end of the aisle and stood next to the Boy-Who-Lived, Arthur gently removed her hand from his arm and handed it to Harry.

"Dearly beloved," Severus began, "We are gathered here today to celebrate the joyous union of Harry Potter and Virginia Weasley. Do you, Harry, take Virginia to be your lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, to love and to cherish, for better or worse, in sickness and in health, for as long as you both shall live?"

“ I do.”

“Do you, Virginia, take Harry to be your lawfully wedded husband, to have and to hold, to love and to cherish, for better or worse, in sickness and in health, for as long as you both shall live?”

“ I do.”

“ Do you have the rings?”

“ Yes,” Ron said, digging in his pocket and pulling out two shining rings of the purest elven silver, etched with elven writing and enchanted by Lolide for long life, health and happiness.

“ Harry, repeat after me,” Severus continued, “ I, Harry.”

“ I, Harry.”

“ Stand here before these people assembled.”

“ Stand here before these people assembled.”

“ And am witnessed by Merlin himself.”

“ And am witnessed by Merlin himself.”

“ Upon taking Virginia as my lawfully wedded wife.”

“ Upon taking Virginia as my lawfully wedded wife.”

“ Now, Ginny, repeat after me. I, Virginia.”

“ I, Virginia.”

“ Stand here before these people assembled.”

“ Stand here before these people assembled.”

“ And am witnessed by Merlin himself.”

“ And am witnessed by Merlin himself.”

“ Upon taking Harry as my lawfully wedded husband.”

“ Upon taking Harry as my lawfully wedded husband.”

As the words were spoken, a soft blue light enveloped the pair, who each raised their wand hands and had them tied together with a rare plant from the elf world. Having completed the wizarding portion of the ceremony, they were ending it with an elven tradition to honour their hosts and Harry's heritage. Once they were firmly tied together, Severus spoke several lines of elven wedding blessings in their original language, something he had spent hours rehearsing. Once this was done, he performed a series of minor elven spells, making the plant shrivel up as its properties were transferred to the newlyweds. Once this was done, the plant was removed and Severus ended the proceedings.

“ With these actions I forever bind you as one, mind and heart, body and soul. As witnessed by the persons here present, and the mighty Merlin himself, I now pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss the bride.”

Once the wedding ceremony was over, the guests were transported back to Domus Corvus Corax for the reception. Molly Weasley had been very busy preparing the food, and the buffet they found upon arrival was by far the best they had seen in a long time. As the band struck up the first song, Harry dragged Ginny to the dance floor and led her in a dance popular at the time of the founders. His new wife smiled at him and leant in for a tender kiss. When she pulled away, Harry grinned back at her.

“ Thank you,” he said.

“ What for?” she asked, her brow wrinkling in confusion.

“ For making me happy. I love you, Gin, and I can't imagine a life without you. Whatever the future may bring, I always want you to remember that.”

“ I will Harry, I will. As for the future, what do you see for us?”

Harry thought about the question seriously, before raising a difficult issue.

“Gin, you know I can’t abandon Glenadade. He’s my *son*, and I’ve missed so much of his life already. I need to spend as much time with him as I can, because as soon as he gets back to where he belongs, I’ll never see him again.”

“I understand that, Harry,” Ginny told him, “And I respect it. I know you want to go with him when he uses the amulet, and I’ll be with you every step of the way. At least this time we’ll know what to expect, and can prepare accordingly.”

“True. After all, who’s to say the first time we end up in will be Glen’s? We could go back a lot further than a millennium. In fact there’s nothing to say we’ll reach his time at all. After all, the amulet’s not exactly predictable.”

“We’ll manage. You know Ron and ‘Mione are coming too, right?” she asked. Harry nodded.

“Yes, they’ll be there. I was thinking of asking a few more people as well. The more the merrier, after all. And if we end up somewhere a little more alien and hostile than last time, we’ll need all the friends we can get.”

“Sure, we’ll discuss it tomorrow. For today, I just want to think about enjoying my wedding day.”

Harry smiled at his wife and pulled her tightly to his chest, resting her head on his shoulder.

“That I can do, Mrs. Potter, that I can do.”

As the reception party was coming to a close, with several people lying around the room drunk, including Petunia Dursley and Draco Malfoy, who were dancing together merrily on one of the buffet tables, Ron tapped his glass loudly and gained everyone’s attention. Once everyone was looking to him, he cleared his throat and prepared to give his best man’s speech.

“ Erm...Right. Hi everyone, as you know, I'm Ron Weasley, best man and brother of the bride. I just wanted to say a few words to the newlyweds. Harry, you're my best mate, and have been for eight long years. We've been to Hell and back together, and I can't think of anyone more worthy of my sister's love than you. Gin, sis, way to go, you nabbed the Boy-Who-Lived!”

Everyone let out a light chuckle, causing Harry to turn beet red. Ron grinned at the couple before continuing.

“ On a more serious note, I just wanted to say one thing. Harry, Ginny, you've been given a great gift, the gift of love. Don't waste it. I know marriages have their ups and downs, and your lives have been filled with trying times and horrors, but you have the chance to be truly happy. Embrace it. Don't let it go. Live, and be happy. To Harry and Ginny Potter,” he said rising his glass in a toast. The rest of the guests joined him, raising their own glasses and repeating his words.

“ Harry and Ginny Potter!”

## Epilogue

**13th November 2026**

“Greetings, fellow wizarding folk. Today, we usher in a new era in wizarding history. Today we take the world back!”

**cheers**

“We have been given a great gift, the gift of magic!”

**cheers**

“For centuries we have laboured under the Ministry of Magic, blindly believing that they knew best, that they could run the wizarding world with honour and integrity, and for centuries, we have suffered their corruption and greed!”

**cheers**

“Well, I say, no more! We are witches and wizards! We are free to choose our own destinies, without the Ministry constantly believing it is right. We have power, and we should use it! The Ministry accuses us, they limit our growth, and they hide us from the world. For centuries, they have shown prejudice to minority groups, and have mistreated those less fortunate than they are! Now is the time to strike back!”

**cheers**

“The werewolves! The vampires! The sirens! The sprites! The merpeople! Centaurs and house elves, goblins and dwarves! All minorities restricted and enslaved by the witches and wizards of the Ministry of Magic! You should be free! Free to choose, free to live, and free to go about your lives with dignity!”

**cheers**

“From now on, the wizarding world will be run by decent people. Cornelius Fudge was an incompetent fool. Aberforth Dumbledore was too eccentric. Icarus Diggle was a lunatic and a criminal! Voldemort

was a tyrant and a hypocrite! I call for order! I call for support! I call for freedom!”

**cheers**

“ All hail the great Deliverer! All hail the Lightning Lord!”

## There and Back Again, A Witch's Tale by Virginia Weasley Timeline

01/09/1995AD Four arrive back in their own time. Speak to Fred and George. Everyone finds out about their time travelling.

04/09/1995AD Potions class – Find out Harry knows the antidote to the Infierno Poison. Harry gets a letter from Heather.

05/09/1995AD DADA lesson – Harry argues with Umbridge and is given detention.

09/09/1995AD Trip to Diagon Alley. Sirius, Remus, Hermione, Ginny and the Weasley parents are given vault keys.

10/09/1995AD Harry and Draco duel. Draco loses his magic and is sent to Heather's house. Glenadade turns up at Hogwarts.

11/09/1995AD Harry's detention with Umbridge – she questions him. Harry and Glen send her mental messages – thinks she's hearing voices.

15/09/1995AD Harry and Glen visit Sev – Harry gives him the books he wrote.

20/09/1995AD Harry and Glen visit Heather – fight with Draco. Harry casts a pain curse on Draco. Harry flees, arriving in the Teutoburg forest – meets Meilani, Leilani and Vrykolakas.

20/10/1995AD Attack on Diagon Alley. Harry comes back, introducing Meilani, Leilani and Vrykolakas to the Order.

21/10/1995AD Attack on Canterbury. Full Order meeting called.

23/10/1995AD Harry goes back to lessons.

04/11/1995AD Harry comes up with a plan for getting rid of Umbridge.

05/11/1995AD Draco returns to Hogwarts and calls a truce with Harry.

26/11/1995AD Draco moves into a private room in the Slytherin dorms.



25/12/1995AD Christmas – Umbridge sings ‘I’m Going Slightly Mad’. Eustace turns up. Ron, Ginny, Hermione and Harry decide to accompany Glen to the past. The Weasley twins receive their copies of the quidditch rule book.

26/12/1995AD Boxing Day – Trip to Heather’s. Heather accepts the DADA position. Ginny has a vision of Dumbledore’s disappearance.

14/01/1996AD Heather arrives at Hogwarts.

15/01/1996AD Heather teaches her first class – Gryffindor/Slytherin 7th years.

01/04/1996AD Dumbledore is committed. Harry is sent to Azkaban for a month. Voldemort plans the fall of Hogwarts.

02/04/1996AD Sirius made temporary Transfiguration teacher and Head of Gryffindor House.

16/04/1996AD Fudge visits Harry in Azkaban. Voldemort sets the date of the Hogwarts attack.

20/04/1996AD Eustace visits Dumbledore in St. Mungo’s.

01/05/1996AD Harry returns to Hogwarts. Party in Harry’s room. Order meeting called, Harry chosen as the new leader. Counter attack planned.

04/05/1996AD Final Order meeting before the final battle. Harry gives everyone Dreamless Sleep potion.

05/05/1996AD Final battle against Voldemort. Voldemort finally defeated.

06/05/1996AD Harry wakes up – is told he is dying. Dumbledore is also dying.

08/05/1996AD Dumbledore dies. Harry is healed.

09/05/1996AD Harry is declared fit and healthy.

13/05/1996AD Dumbledore’s funeral.

17/06/1996AD Exams start.

01/07/1996AD Exams end.

14/07/1996AD Leaving Feast. The Marauders and friends put on a play. Harry proposes to Ginny – She agrees. Harry asks the Weasleys' permission to marry their daughter.

15/07/1996AD Time travellers graduate from Hogwarts. Last Order of the Phoenix meeting. Harry removes Severus' Dark Mark.

31/07/1996AD Harry's 19th birthday.

01/08/1996AD Harry gathers delegates to go to the elf world.

02/08/1996AD Delegation goes to the elf world to conduct peace talks.

27/08/1996AD Harry visits the Dursleys and invites them to the wedding reception.

31/08/1996AD NEWT results. Harry and Ginny's wedding.

## Harry Potter and the Amulet of Time Timeline

01/09/990AD Harry, Ron, Hermione and Ginny arrive in the time of the Hogwarts founders.

02/09/990AD First day of classes.

03/09/990AD Research the amulet in the library. Tell Ardwick and Christabel about the time travel.

04/09/990AD Ardwick finds information on the amulet.

05/09/990AD Monday – Start to write their books. First sword fighting lesson.

06/09/990AD Tuesday – First animagus lesson. First confrontation with Horatio.

07/09/990AD Wednesday – First Dark Arts lesson. First martial arts lesson.

08/09/990AD Thursday – First invisibility lesson. Harry shows his first bit of wandless magic.

09/09/990AD Friday – First archery lesson. Meet Lolide.

10/09/990AD Saturday – First duelling lesson. Harry has a flashback.

11/09/990AD Sunday – First wandless magic lesson. Harry speaks to Lolide for the first time. Starts to study the Dark Arts and elven magic.

30/09/990AD Marauders founded.

01/10/990AD First big prank on the school.

12/10/990AD Gallatea and Ardwick first hear about quidditch.

13/10/990AD First practice game of quidditch.

15/10/990AD Plan Gallatea's birthday party.

21/10/990AD Gallatea's birthday – party, presents, quidditch pitch revealed.

22/10/990AD Rest of the school find out about the quidditch pitch.

31/10/990AD Hallow'een feast. Slytherin acts suspiciously. Gallatea reveals her telepathy to Harry. Harry shows her his snakes.

01/11/990AD Harry and Gallatea share their revelations with the others. Find out about Slytherin's snake spies.

21/11/990AD Quidditch tryouts.

23/11/990AD Meeting in the Chamber of Secrets.

01/12/990AD First ever quidditch match – Gryffindor Vs Ravenclaw.

11/12/990AD Harry wakes up in the hospital wing after being hit with a bludger.

12/12/990AD Harry overhears Lolide and Gryffindor talking about the founder's heart problems.

13/12/990AD Harry goes back to classes. Makes quidditch deal with Ministry and Flourish & Bott's.

14/12/990AD Care of Magical Creatures – Sleeping dragon tickled by Horatio, Gallatea rescued by Harry. Their first kiss.

19/12/990AD Christmas holidays start.

20/12/990AD Ardwick proposes a prank war between the Marauders.

21/12/990AD Peeves' prank.

22/12/990AD Ardwick's prank.

23/12/990AD Ron's prank.

24/12/990AD Harry's prank. Peeves finds out about the time travellers.

25/12/990AD Christmas day prank. Horatio casts the Cruciatus on Hermione and is expelled. Gryffindor and Slytherin duel. Harry first uses the parseltongue magic removal spell. The school motto is founded.

26/12/990AD Trip to Hogsmeade. Buy costumes and immunity necklaces. Soul Magic lesson for Harry. Overhear Slytherin's plans. Yule Ball. Harry and Gallatea go as High Elves. Ardwick, Hermione, Ron and Ginny go as the founders.

18/04/991AD Harry first visits the elf world.

13/06/991AD OWLs start.

18/07/991AD Last quidditch match of the season – Ravenclaw Vs Slytherin

19/07/991AD School breaks up for the summer.

21/07/991AD The time travellers and Gallatea start to get bored. Study to pass the time.

26/07/991AD Harry visits the elves for a month.

28/07/991AD Battle in the Chamber of Secrets. Harry's elven skills are revealed.

29/07/991AD Gaerwyn first visits the human world.

31/07/991AD Harry's 16th birthday. Lots of alcohol. Harry is given the Gryffindor Tower room, and a handmade holly wood broom.

01/08/991AD Harry and Gallatea wake up in the same bed, half dressed.

06/08/991AD Ravenclaw proposes the time travellers take their NEWTs.

17/08/991AD Lolide finishes teaching Harry.

18/08/991AD Ron and Harry are given their specially ordered quidditch rule books and their new Gringotts keys.

22/08/991AD Hogsmeade trip. Harry orders the building of Domus Corvus Corax.

30/08/991AD OWL and NEWT results.

01/08/991AD Harry, Ron, Hermione and Ginny go to the next time period. Gallatea tells Harry she's pregnant.

08/10/991AD Gallatea binds her soul to the dedication stone in the quidditch pitch.

24/04/992AD Glenadade Harold Potter, the first of the Potter line, is born.

21/07/993AD Ardwick, Christabel and Gallatea graduate.

03/04/994AD Lucifina starts to take over the wizarding world.

01/04/995AD Ardwick and Christabel marry.

15/05/997AD Gallatea Ravenclaw dies of influenza.

20/07/997AD Peeves graduates.

27/03/1000AD Peeves is killed with Avada Kedavra, becoming a poltergeist.

04/09/1009AD Lucifina attacks Hogwarts. Glenadade sent to the future.

12/11/1547AD Elves sever ties with the humans.

28/03/1592AD Rebel elves banished from the elf world. Teutoburg Coty established.

06/02/1759AD Light vampires break from their covens. Move to Teutoburg City.

01/09/1943AD Arrive in the Great Hall, meet Dumbledore, who read Gallatea's book about them. Sorting: Harry – Hufflepuff, Ron – Gryffindor, Hermione – Ravenclaw, Ginny – Slytherin. Meet Minh, Robert, Sybil, Eustace, Flitwick, Caligula and Satanus.

02/09/1943AD Trip to Diagon Alley. Told about Grindelwald's alliance with Hitler. Go to Harry and Ron's Gringott's vault. Harry tells the others he is a Dark wizard.

03/09/1943AD Research Ravenclaw, plan a prank with Eustace, Robert and Persephone. First prank in that time.

04/09/1943AD First day of lessons. Have trouble using their wands for everything.

28/09/1943AD Find out Harry is his own ancestor. 'Tea's ghost is released from the stone.

14/10/1943AD Minh asks Harry to go to Falaryth with her.

21/10/1943AD Minh and Harry got to Falaryth.

28/10/1943AD Quidditch tryouts.

31/10/1943AD Attack on Hogwarts. Dumbledore sees Harry using the Dark Arts. Persephone is killed. Dumbledore becomes headmaster.

02/11/1943AD Memorial service. Harry and Dumbledore discuss his use of the Dark Arts.

05/11/1943AD Persephone's funeral. Statue of her placed in the Gryffindor Room.

16/11/1943AD Minh joins the Marauders.

07/12/1943AD Dumbledore asks the time travellers to teach Minerva McGonagall the animagus transformation.

19/12/1943AD First quidditch match of the year – Hufflepuff Vs Gryffindor.

20/12/1943AD Time travellers and Minh are invited to spend Christmas with the Potters.

21/12/1943AD Christmas holidays start. Meet the Potters.

25/12/1943AD Christmas day – air raid. Potters killed. Meet the Logans.

26/12/1943AD Harry tells Eustace he lost his parents, girlfriend and son.

07/01/1944AD Grindelwald's followers attack London. Tiberius Malfoy bitten by Nirah.

10/01/1944AD Floo network back online.

11/01/1944AD First go to Domus Corvus Corax. Return to Hogwarts.

27/01/1944AD Agnes and Charles Potter's funeral.

01/02/1944AD Start lessons with Dumbledore.

02/02/1944AD The time travellers learn to apparate.

03/02/1944AD Minh and Eustace meet Gallatea.

24/02/1944AD Ron finds a way to free Gallatea's spirit.

25/02/1944AD Gallatea's spirit is freed. Dumbledore finds out about her. She becomes the Ravenclaw ghost. Harry proposes a resistance force.

01/03/1944AD Slytherin Vs Hufflepuff quidditch match.

02/03/1944AD First Order of the Phoenix meeting.

09/03/1944AD Gaerwyn and Lolide visit and join the Order,.

11/03/1944AD Order meeting.

30/03/1944AD Attack on Paris. Time travellers captured.

31/03/1944AD Ron and Hermione sent to Grossrosen camp. Harry and Ginny wake up in Grindelwald's headquarters. Harry is tortured.

01/04/1944AD Task allocated at the camp.



18/04/1944AD Yanika taken to the laboratories to be studied.

12/05/1944AD Furnace breaks – dig a mass grave. Ron and Hermione meet and kiss.

19/05/1944AD Ginny kisses Harry. He tells her he needs time.

20/05/1944AD Harry and Ginny separated.

29/05/1944AD Gallatea telepathically contacts Hermione. Harry discovers he can use elven healing magic.

30/05/1944AD Ginny sees Ron and Hermione's rescue in a vision. Harry's telepathy awakens.

02/06/1944AD Ron and Hermione are rescued. Harry telepathically contacts Dumbledore.

05/06/1944AD Harry and Ginny are rescued. Grindelwald is killed. Tom Riddle receives the Dark Mark from Harry.

06/06/1944AD D-Day landings. The time travellers return to Hogwarts.

12/06/1944AD OWLs start.

26/06/1944AD OWLs end.

30/06/1944AD Decide where the time travellers and Eustace will spend the holidays.

03/07/1944AD Leaving feast – Sybil Trelawney makes the Ouroboros prophecy.

04/07/1944AD End of term.

18/07/1944AD Trip to Diagon Alley. Harry gets his raven and ouroboros tattoo, and gets a separate vault for his money.

31/07/1944AD Harry's 17th birthday.

04/08/1944AD Elves return to Falaryth. The time travellers and Eustace go with them.

06/08/1944AD Humans return to the wizarding world. Harry makes Dumbledore leader of the Order, gives him a vault key, and gives him custody of Fawkes.

17/08/1944AD Time travellers go to stay with the Logans.

23/08/1944AD Presentation of the Order of Merlin awards.

31/08/1944AD OWL results. Harry gives Eustace a vault key and his invisibility cloak, as well as telling him his name is Harry Potter.

01/09/1944AD The four leave for the next time.

30/06/1945AD Eustace adopted by the Logans.

14/09/1945AD Robert Black becomes friends with the Slytherins

14/02/1949AD Eustace asks Minh to be his girlfriend.

03/06/1950AD Eustace proposes to Minh.

26/06/1950AD Minh decides to stay in the human world.

10/08/1955AD Eustace and Minh marry.

01/11/1958AD Robert Black joins the Death Eaters.

24/12/1959AD Minh tells Eustace she is pregnant.

02/04/1960AD James Potter is born.

13/06/1960AD Lily Evans born.

05/01/1971AD John Logan dies.

30/08/1974AD Petunia and Vernon marry.

01/09/1975AD The four arrive in 1975. Call Order meeting. Tell the Order about time travelling. Harry meets Heather. Feast – Harry casts mass silencing spell.

02/09/1975AD Trip to Diagon Alley. 'Tea tells Harry to move on.

03/09/1975AD Hermione, Ginny and Harry meet the Marauders.

15/09/1975AD Sev learns the Patronus charm.

16/09/1975AD Sev and Harry join the quidditch team. Harry beats Lucius in a duel.

13/10/1975AD Marauders prank Harry and Sev.

14/10/1975AD Harry and Sev retaliate.

16/10/1975AD Marauders and Lily dance the cancan at breakfast.

28/10/1975AD Ginny has a vision.

31/10/1975AD St Mungo's attacked. Ron discovers he is a healer. Harry becomes a part vampire and is in a coma.

09/11/1975AD Ron wakes up. Sev and the Marauders find out what happened.

05/12/1975AD Harry wakes from his coma.

08/12/1975AD Harry depressed – ignores everyone. Ginny tells Remus about the time travel. Remus tells her he is a werewolf.

09/12/1975AD Remus talks to Harry.

10/12/1975AD Sev finds out his animagus form – velociraptor.

11/12/1975AD Full moon – Ginny goes with Remus.

12/12/1975AD Ginny proposes the time travellers teach the Marauders the animagus transformation.

18/12/1975AD Christmas holidays start. Marauders find out their animagus forms.

25/12/1975AD Christmas Day – Harry shares it with his family.

03/01/1976AD Holidays end.

04/01/1976AD Sev shows Harry his Dark Mark – becomes a spy. Sev joins the Order of the Phoenix.

27/01/1976AD Sev's first Order meeting. Harry pranks the Slytherins – pretends to be Voldemort. Harry – vision – Prophecy of the Four.

28/01/1976AD Voldemort sends Dumbledore a howler. Harry tells Dumbledore about the vision.

18/02/1976AD Harry dreams – Heather captured as revenge against Harry 'Evans'.

27/02/1976AD Harry attacks Voldemort at a Death Eater meeting.

01/03/1976AD Marauders complete the animagus transformation.

02/03/1976AD Full moon – all go with Remus.

01/04/1976AD Marauders past and present spend the day pranking people.

03/04/1976AD Sev and Harry go to Diagon Alley. Harry gets lion tattoo. Diagon Alley attacked.

17/04/1976AD Hollerith tests completed.

18/04/1976AD Hollerith tests carried out.

22/04/1876AD Hollerith test results compiled.

23/04/1976AD Lily, James and Remus join the Order of the Phoenix.

24/04/1976AD Slytherin versus Gryffindor quidditch match.

28/04/1976AD Full moon – Sev questions Harry on where he goes.

30/04/1976AD Gaerwyn and Lolide plan James' birthday party. Harry visits Falaryth.

02/05/1976AD James' 16th birthday – told of his elven heritage.

24/05/1976AD Sirius tells Sev to go to the Whomping Willow on the full moon.,

26/05/1976AD Full moon – Whomping Willow incident.

27/05/1976AD Sirius punished – banned from playing pranks.

28/05/1976AD Lily breaks up with James.

14/06/1976AD Exams start.

03/07/1976AD Exams end.

10/07/1976AD Harry talks to James and Lily – they get back together.

12/07/1976AD Leaving Feast – the Great Prank – dress up as Voldemort and the Death Eaters. Harry asks Ginny out.

13/07/1976AD Harry tells Sev everything. Cast a charm on the students to make them forget the specifics of the time travellers. 'Tea tells Harry about his son and Lucifina.

31/07/1976AD Harry's 18th birthday.

25/08/1976AD Alder Hay Children's Hospital attacked. Heather rescued.

01/09/1976AD Harry tells James and Lily he is from the future. Hogwarts Express attacked. Four go to next time.

10/06/1978AD James proposes to Lily.

12/06/1978AD James, Lily, Pet, Sirius, Lily and Severus graduate. Severus offered the Potions job.

03/09/1979AD Sirius accepted into the Order of the Phoenix.

31/07/1980AD Harry Potter born.

05/08/1980AD Eustace and Minh go into hiding in the elf world.

31/10/1981AD James and Lily killed. Voldemort defeated. Harry becomes the Boy-Who-Lived.

01/11/1981AD Sirius framed. Sent to Azkaban without trial.

30/07/1995AD Death Eater meeting. Voldemort plans to capture Harry in Diagon Alley.

31/07/1995AD Harry's 15th birthday. Receives the Amulet of Time.

03/08/1995AD Harry goes to the Burrow.

12/08/1995AD Hermione goes to the Burrow. Trip to Diagon Alley. Simbi and Nirah bought, as well as Harry's parseltongue book. Wormtail captured.

01/09/1995AD Draco visits their compartment on the train. First activate the amulet. Four arrive back in their own time. Speak to Fred and George. Everyone finds out about their time travelling.

04/09/1995AD Potions class – Find out Harry knows the antidote to the Infierno Poison. Harry gets a letter from Heather.

05/09/1995AD DADA lesson – Harry argues with Umbridge and is given detention.

09/09/1995AD Trip to Diagon Alley. Sirius, Remus, Hermione, Ginny and the Weasley parents are given vault keys.

10/09/1995AD Harry and Draco duel. Draco loses his magic and is sent to Heather's house. Heather and Draco meet. Draco is shocked that Heather is alive. She agrees to let him stay. Draco discovers cartoons. Glenadade turns up at Hogwarts.

11/09/1995AD Draco wakes up at Heather's. Trip to Canterbury by car. Harry's detention with Umbridge – she questions him. Harry and Glen send her mental messages – thinks she's hearing voices.

15/09/1995AD Draco goes to the library for the first time. Harry and Glen visit Sev – Harry gives him the books he wrote.

19/09/1995AD Draco discovers cooking.

20/09/1995AD Harry and Glen visit Heather – fight with Draco. Harry casts a pain curse on Draco. Harry flees, arriving in the Teutoburg forest – meets Meilani, Leilani and Vrykolakas.

21/09/1995AD Draco sees a memory of the Death Eaters and Voldemort in Heather's penseive.

24/09/1995AD Heather offers to help Draco to be different from his father.

28/09/1995AD Draco meets Evelyn.

06/10/1995AD Draco finds out Evelyn has a magical great aunt.

07/10/1995AD Draco and the McCarthys go to the Party in the Park. Draco falls out with Heather.

11/10/1995AD Heather makes up with Draco.

14/10/1995AD Heather and Draco go to Paris on the Eurostar.

15/10/1995AD Heather takes Draco sightseeing. Draco find out about the Battle of Paris and the time travellers' capture.

16/10/1995AD Heather and Draco visit the Louvre.

17/10/1995AD Heather takes Draco to Disneyland.

18/10/1995AD Heather and Draco go back to England.

20/10/1995AD Attack on Diagon Alley. Harry returns, introducing Meilani, Leilani and Vrykolakas to the Order.

21/10/1995AD Evelyn's family take Draco to the cinema to see Pocahontas. Death Eaters attack Canterbury. Mr. McCarthy dies. Evelyn learns about magic and finds out she is a witch. Draco defies his father. Heather contacts Harry. Order goes to Canterbury. Full Order meeting called.

23/10/1995AD Harry goes back to lessons.

25/10/1995AD Draco gets up and finds out what happened after the attack.

27/10/1995AD Evie mourns.

28/10/1995AD Evie leaves Draco's room. They visit her mother in hospital.

29/10/1995AD Mr. McCarthy's funeral.

31/10/1995AD Draco is disowned and disinherited.

04/11/1995AD Harry comes up with a plan for getting rid of Umbridge.

05/11/1995AD Draco goes back to Hogwarts and calls a truce with Harry.

07/11/1995AD Evie's aunt visits Heather.

25/12/1995AD Christmas – Umbridge sings 'I'm Going Slightly Mad'. Eustace turns up. Ron, Ginny, Hermione and Harry decide to accompany Glen to the past. The Weasley twins receive their copies of the quidditch rule book.

26/12/1995AD Boxing Day – Trip to Heather's. Heather accepts the DADA position. Ginny has a vision of Dumbledore's disappearance.

14/01/1996AD Heather arrives at Hogwarts.

15/01/1996AD Heather teaches her first class – Gryffindor/Slytherin 7th years.

01/04/1996AD Dumbledore is committed. Harry is sent to Azkaban for a month. Voldemort plans the fall of Hogwarts.

02/04/1996AD Sirius made temporary Transfiguration teacher and Head of Gryffindor House.

16/04/1996AD Fudge visits Harry in Azkaban. Voldemort sets the date of the Hogwarts attack.

20/04/1996AD Eustace visits Dumbledore in St. Mungo's.



01/05/1996AD Harry returns to Hogwarts. Party in Harry's room. Order meeting called, Harry chosen as the new leader. Counter attack planned.

04/05/1996AD Final Order meeting before the final battle. Harry gives everyone Dreamless Sleep potion.

05/05/1996AD Final battle against Voldemort. Voldemort finally defeated.

06/05/1996AD Harry wakes up – is told he is dying. Dumbledore is also dying.

08/05/1996AD Dumbledore dies. Harry is healed.

09/05/1996AD Harry is declared fit and healthy.

13/05/1996AD Dumbledore's funeral.

17/06/1996AD Exams start.

01/07/1996AD Exams end.

14/07/1996AD Leaving Feast. The Marauders and friends put on a play. Harry proposes to Ginny – She agrees. Harry asks the Weasleys' permission to marry their daughter.

15/07/1996AD Time travellers graduate from Hogwarts. Last Order of the Phoenix meeting. Harry removes Severus' Dark Mark.

31/07/1996AD Harry's 19th birthday.

01/08/1996AD Harry gathers delegates to go to the elf world.

02/08/1996AD Delegation goes to the elf world to conduct peace talks.

27/08/1996AD Harry visits the Dursleys and invites them to the wedding reception.

31/08/1996AD NEWT results. Harry and Ginny's wedding.

13/11/2026AD Fall of the Ministry of Magic. The Lightning Lord comes into power.